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Fran Alexis, BA Hons

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Littera pro uerbis: Epistolarity, Ethnography and the Author's Persona in Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto*.

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I declare that this thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of another higher degree or diploma in any teaching institution, nor, so far as I am aware, any material published or written by others, except when due reference is made in the text of the thesis

Fran Alexis

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Fran Alexis

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Abstract:

The aim of my thesis is to extend the current discussions of ethnography, epistolarity and the ancient persona, to the text of Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto*. It is a particularly appropriate text to extend the ideas of literary and cultural identity and epistolarity as the poems are written as letters by an urban Roman poet who is exiled to the end of the known world. His poems reveal, in the medium he knows best, the varied responses of a sophisticated city-dwelling poet to life in the wilderness on the frontiers of the Roman Empire.

I argue that the poet describes his unfamiliar situation by using terms and traditions 'known' or familiar to his readers to illustrate his 'unknown' place of exile. In this thesis, I look at how the poet uses well known ethnographical stereotypes and the letter form, both to illustrate his unfamiliar location in exile in an understandable way, and to blur the distinction between the author as an historical person in a specific geographical location and one who is a literary persona constructed along with poetic geographical and anthropological detail.

Although many scholars have written on the subject of Ovid's exile poetry, few have looked at the epistolarity or the letter form of these last poems from exile. I show in this thesis that the *Epistulae ex Ponto* is a text that repays scrutiny in this light because the poet draws comparisons and writes about his situation in exile using the recognisable literary form of letters. I also show how the poet's increased use of his name, Naso, affects our perception of the persona in the *Epistulae ex Ponto.* I argue that in these last poems from

exile the persona is indistinct as the poet can now only identify himself using letters instead of the spoken word. I show how the poet blends the personal and private sphere of the epistolary genre with the public nature of published elegiac verse, using the names of well known Roman citizens in an attempt to strengthen his appeal for help and support from specific individuals.

I conclude that the poems in the *Epistulae ex Ponto* should be read with the poet's exile firmly in mind. Exile necessitates the use of letters in place of spoken words, so an awareness of literary devices, such as ethnographic stereotypes, epistolarity and emphasis on the author and recipient of these letters rather than on constructed personae, enhances our pleasure and understanding of these poems sent from exile.

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Introduction

The content of Ovid's last major collection of poetry, the *Epistulae ex Ponto,*[1] leads me to accept, with the majority of scholars, that the Roman poet, Publius Ovidius Naso was relegated to Tomis, on the shores of the Black Sea in the year 8 C.E.[2] Because of his relegation to such a distant place of exile at the very edge of the known world, Ovid must use 'letters in place of spoken words' (*littera pro uerbis, Pont.* 1.7.1) to communicate with his friends in Rome. I suggest that the poet uses the traditional conventions of letter writing and ethnographical stereotypes in his *Epistulae ex Ponto* to describe his situation in exile so that the letter, with its personal terms and familiar language, appeals directly to his friends and contemporaries in Rome. I argue that the poet describes his unfamiliar situation by using terms and traditions 'known' or familiar to his readers to illustrate his 'unknown' place of exile. [3] In this way, the poet overcomes the difficulty of conveying, in terms meaningful to his customary urban audience, the enormity of the dislocation in his life when he is exiled.

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1 For the text of the Epistulae ex Ponto I have used Wheeler A. L, (tr) and G.P. Gould, (ed) Ovid. Tristia, Ex Ponto, Cambridge, Mass., 1996, and have also consulted Richmond, J.A., (ed) P. Ovidius Nasonis, ex Ponto libri quattuor, Leipzig, 1990.

2 Wheeler A. L, 1996, Introduction, xviii, explains: 'Relegatio was milder than the exilium of the late republic in that the poet's property was not confiscated and his civic rights were not taken from him, but it was harsher in Ovid's case in that he was ordered to stay in one designated locality'. Fitton Brown, A.D., 'The Unreality of Ovid's Tomitan Exile', Liverpool Classical Monthly, 10: 19-22, 1985, is the only scholar to suggest that Ovid was never in Tomis and that his poems are a literary hoax. Most other scholars accept, with Little, D., 'Ovid's Last Poems: Cry of Pain from Exile or Literary Frolic in Rome?' Prudentia, 22, 23-39, 1990: that the poems were written by Ovid in exile. He writes that the content of these poems show that they are concerned with exile in all its sadness and hardship. See also Batty, R.M., 'On Getic and Sarmatian Shores: Ovid's Account of the Danube Lands', Historia, 43, 88-111, 1994.

3 Hinds, S., Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of appropriation in Roman poetry, Cambridge, 1998, xi, at the very beginning of this excellent work on allusion writes: '[w]hen we describe the world, consciously or unconsciously we measure our description against previous descriptions of the world'.

In this thesis, I look at how the poet uses well known literary and ethnographical stereotypes as well as the letter form, both to illustrate his unfamiliar location in exile in an understandable way, and to blur the distinction between the author and persona: the one an historical person in a specific geographical location and the other constructed as a literary persona in a poetic landscape. The collection of elegies known as the *Epistulae ex Ponto*, has been seen as either historically and geographically accurate, or as an exaggerated literary construct, but I contend that these verse-letters resist such a one-dimensional reading.[4]

Ovid's poetry has been read and appreciated by many people through the ages and much scholarly work has been done in an endeavour to reach a greater understanding of the poet, the poetry and the times in which it was written. Critical analysis of ancient Roman poetry and Ovid's poetry in particular is ongoing and often the debate is intensified with new ways of reading promoted by scholars and then either endorsed or challenged by others in the same field of study. Most recent Ovidian scholarship has focussed on Ovid's earlier poems rather than his last verse-letters from exile and this thesis seeks to redress the balance.

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4 Holzberg, N., Ovid, The Poet and his Work, Ithaca and London, 1998, in his introduction, ix. Hallett, J.P., 'Contextualizing the Text: The Journey to Ovid', Helios, 17:2, 187-195, 1990, also cautions against a simplistic view of Ovid based only on any one of his works. King, R.J., 'Ritual and Autobiography: The Cult of Reading in Ovid's Tristia 4.10', Helios, 25, 99-119, 1998, writes that the author shapes the reader's understanding, Casali, S., 'Quaerenti Plura Legendum: On the Necessity of 'Reading More' in Ovid's Exile Poetry', Ramus, 26, 80-112, 1997, explains how Ovid shapes himself, while Claassen, J-M., Displaced Persons: the literature of exile from Cicero to Boethius, London, 1999(b), shows in the section on Ovid, how Ovid's personae multiply throughout his work. Batty, R.M., 'On Getic and Sarmatian Shores: Ovid's Account of the Danube Lands', 1994, accepts Ovid and his exile without question while Tarrant, R., 'Ovid and Ancient History' Ovid's Poetics of Illusion, P. Hardie, (ed) Cambridge, 13-33, 2002, also allows an historicist reading.

Recent articles of such scholars can be separated into different areas of interest and/or ways of reading. Some scholars show a concern with previous arguments.[5] Often engaging with a previous argument is just the starting point for new scholarship and not the main theme. John Henderson (1997)[6] alludes to an article by J-M Claassen (1990)[7] on Ovid's use of personification, but apart from punning on the term 'wavering' in his title, Henderson is more concerned with the ambiguity of the private and public nature of Ovid's poetry. The process of arguing against a position always forces a re-reading and re-evaluation of Ovid's poetry from yet another angle.[8] Others attempt to establish continuity between Ovid's earlier poetry and that written after exile.[9] Many scholars see Ovid's poetry as being part of a continuous poetic tradition as well as showing connections within his body of work.[10] In contrast, Green (1994) emphasizes Ovid's change of theme from the contemporary and erotic in his early work to an obsession with mythical transformations,

[5] An example of a well debated argument is the question of whether Ovid was relegated to Tomis or not. See, Little, D., 'Ovid's Last Poems: Cry of Pain from Exile or Literary Frolic in Rome?', 1990, Fitton Brown, A.D., 'The Unreality of Ovid's Tomitan Exile', 1985; and Williams, G.D., *Banished Voices*, Cambridge, 1994.

[6] Henderson, J., 'Not Wavering but Frowning: Ovid as Isopleth (*Tristia* 1 through 10)' *Ramus*, 26: 139-171, 1997.

[7] Claassen, J-M., 'Ovid's Wavering Identity: Personification and Depersonalisation in Exile Poems', *Latomus*, 49, 102-116, 1990(b).

[8] von Albrecht, M., 'Ovidian Scholarship: Some Trends and Perspectives', *The Interpretation of Roman Poetry: Empiricism or Hermeneutics?* K. Galinsky, (ed) Frankfurt am Main, 104-23, 1992; Fantham, E., 'Strengths and Weaknesses of Current Ovidian Criticism Response to Michael von Albrecht', *The Interpretation of Roman Poetry: Empiricism or Hermeneutics?*, K. Galinsky, (ed) Frankfurt am Main, 191-99, 1992(b); Hinds, S., 'Generalising about Ovid' *The Imperial Muse*, A. J. Boyle (ed) *Ramus*, 1988.

[9] Fantham, E., 'Ovid in Tauris: Ovid *Tr.* 4.4 and *Ex P.* 3.2', *The Two Worlds of the Poet: New Perspectives on Vergil*, R.M. Wilhelm & H. Jones, (eds) Detroit, 1992(a) and Davisson, M.H.T., '*Quid moror exemplis?*: Mythological *exempla* in Ovid's pre-exilic Poems and the Elegies from Exile', *Phoenix*, 47, 213-37, 1993.

[10] Newlands, C., 'The Role of the Book in *Tristia*, 3.1', *Ramus*, 26:1, 57-79, 1997; Johnson Patricia J., 'Ovid's Livia in Exile', *Classical World*, 90, 403-20, 1997; Hinds, S., 'After Exile: Time and Teleology from *Metamorphoses* to *Ibis*', *Ovidian Transformations: Essays on the Metamorphoses and its Reception*, P. Hardie, A. Barchiesi and S. Hinds, (eds) Cambridge, 1999(b); Hinds, S., 'First Among Women: Ovid, *Tristia* 1.6 and the Traditions of 'Exemplary' Catalogue', *armor:roma, Love and Latin Literature*, Susanna Morton Braund and Roland Mayer, (eds) Cambridge, 1999(a); Hardie, Philip, *Ovid's Poetics of Illusion*, Cambridge, 2002.

aetiological explanations of folklore and the cold and danger of exile in his later works.[11] Scholarly debate has also centred on whether Ovid's poetry is Pro-Augustan or Anti-Augustan. As well as engaging in argument on terms of reference,[12] scholars have seen Ovid's poetry as either unambiguously panegyric,[13] or ironic and dissident.[14] Much of the discussion centres on Ovid's earlier poetry, or relates to the cause of his exile. Ovid's poetry has been read as purely literary from the point of view of Narratological technique or from a Historicist viewpoint, as geographically and politically accurate. This scholarship heightens our awareness of the structure and language of Ovid's poetry. Nugent (1990) writing about *Tristia* 2 shows Ovid's voice as dissident, questioning Augustus' right to pronounce judgement on his poetry. In spite of the poet's claim to the contrary, Nugent proposes that *Metamorphoses* is the poem which caused his exile.[15] J-M Claassen (1990) writes that the geographical and scientific details in Ovid's exile poetry are not accurate but poetic, that scientific objectivity is subservient to his poetic purpose.[16] Many scholars see Ovid's poetry from a purely literary point of view, yet most acknowledge that exile has

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[11] Green, P., *Ovid: The Poems of Exile*, Harmondsworth, 1994(a); Green, P., 'Ovid in Exile', *Southern Humanities Review*, 28, 29-41, 1994(b); Stabryla, S., 'In Defence of the Autonomy of the Poetic World (Some Remarks on *Tristia* 2)', *Hermes*, 122, 469-78, 1994.

[12] Kennedy, D.F., ''Augustan' and 'Anti-Augustan': Reflections on Terms of Reference', *Roman Poetry and Propaganda in the Age of Augustus*, A. Powell, (ed) Bristol, 26-58, 1992; Davis, P.J., 'Since My Part Has Been Well Played: Conflicting Evaluations of Augustus', *Ramus*, 28, 1-15, 1999(b); Millar, F., 'Ovid and the *Domus Augusta:* Rome seen from Tomoi', *Journal of Roman Studies*, 83, 1-17, 1993; Williams, G.D., *Banished Voices*, 1994; White, P., 'Ovid and the Augustan Milieu', *Brill's Companion to Ovid*, B.W. Boyd, (ed.) Leiden: Brill, 1-25, 2002.

[13] Mader, G., 'Panegyric and Persuasion in Ovid, *Tr.* 2.317-336', *Latomus*, 50, 139-149, 1991; Millar, F., 'Ovid and the *Domus Augusta*, 1993; Williams, G.D. *Banished Voices*, 1994, and O'Gorman, E., 'Love and the Family: Augustus and Ovidian Elegy', *Arethusa*, 30, 103-23, 1997, take a middle line.

[14] Casali, S., ''Reading More' in Ovid's Exile Poetry', 1997.

[15] Nugent, S.G., '*Tristia* 2: Ovid and Augustus' *Between Republic and Empire: Interpretations of Augustus and his Principate*, K. Raaflaub & M. Toher, (eds) Berkeley, 239-57, 1990. See Forbis, E.P., 'Voice and Voicelesness in Ovid's Exile Poetry', *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History, Collection Latomus*, 8, 2, C. Deroux, (ed) Brussels, 245-267, 1993, for the suggestion that *Metamorphoses* was the poem which caused Ovid's exile.

[16] Claassen, J-M., 'Ovid's Poetic Pontus', *Papers of the Leeds International Latin Seminar*, F. Cairns, (ed) Leeds: 65-94, 1990(a). For an opposite view see Batty, R.M., 'On Getic and Sarmatian Shores: Ovid's Account of the Danube Lands', 1994.

a profound influence on his work.[17] Modern literary theories such as Feminist readings and other new ways of reading have been applied to Ovid's poetry. Judith Hallett (1990)[18] brings to Ovid's poetry a feminist perspective which encourages an awareness of the difference between classical antiquity and modern western society, while Walker (1997)[19] applies a psychological reading to Ovid's exile poetry. Habinek (1998) casts Ovid's exile poetry in yet another new light, reading them as dispatches from the contact zone of a Roman imperial outpost and Davis (2002) then responds to Habinek's article by drawing our attention to the difficulty of seeing Ovid, an unwilling exile, as part of Roman Imperialism. [20]

Although many scholars have written on the subject of Ovid's exile poetry, few have looked at the epistolarity or the letter form of these last poems from exile. I show in this thesis that the *Epistulae ex Ponto* repays scrutiny in this light because in this text the poet draws comparisons and writes about his situation in exile using the recognisable literary form of letters. I also show that our perception of a literary persona in the *Epistulae ex Ponto* is challenged by the poet's use of the letter form and an increased use of his own name, Naso. I argue that in these last poems from exile the persona becomes indistinct as

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[17] Williams, G.D., 'Conversing After Sunset: A Callimachean echo in Ovid's Exile Poetry', *Classical Quarterly*, 41: I, 169-171, 1991; Williams, G.D., 'Representations of the Book-Roll in Latin Poetry: Ovid, *Tr*.1.1.3-14 and Related Texts', *Mnemosyne*, 45, 178-189, 1992; Williams, G.D., 'Writing the Mother-Tongue: Hermione and Helen in *Heroides* 8 (A Tomitan Approach)', *Ramus*, 26:2, 113-137, 1997; Oliensis, E., 'Return to Sender: The Rhetoric of Nomina in Ovid's *Tristia*', *Ramus*, 26:2, 179-93, 1997; King, R.J., 'Ritual and Autobiography', 1998; Claassen, J-M., *Displaced Persons*, 1999(b); Barchiesi, A., 'Teaching Augustus through Allusion', *Speaking Volumes: Narrative and Intertext in Ovid and Other Latin Poets*, London, 79-104, 2001; Davis, P.J., 'Instructing the Emperor: Ovid *Tristia* 2', *Latomus*, 58, 799-809, 1999(a).

[18] Hallett, J.P., 'Contextualizing the Text: The Journey to Ovid', 1990.

[19] Walker, A.D., 'Oedipal Narratives and the Exilic Ovid', *Ramus*, 26, 2, 194-204, 1997.

[20] Habinek, T.N., *The Politics of Latin Literature: Writing, Identity and Empire in Ancient Rome*, Princeton, 1998 and Habinek, T., 'Ovid and Empire', P. Hardie, (ed) *Ovid's Poetics of Illusion*, Cambridge, 46-51, 2002. Davis, P.J., 'The Colonial Subject in Ovid's Exile Poetry', *American Journal of Philology*, 123: 257-273, 2002

the poet can now only identify himself through letters. I show how the poet blends the personal and private sphere of the epistolary genre with the public nature of published elegiac verse, in an attempt to strengthen his appeal for help and support from specific and named individuals.

The aim of this thesis is to extend the current discussions of ethnography, epistolarity and the ancient persona, to the text of Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto*. It is a particularly appropriate text to extend the ideas of literary and cultural identity and epistolarity as the poems are written as letters by an urban Roman poet who is exiled to the end of the known world. His poems reveal, in the medium he knows best, the varied responses of a sophisticated city-dwelling poet to life in the wilderness on the frontiers of the Roman Empire.

Recent studies on ethnography in the ancient world mostly concern geographical or historical prose texts so this thesis will add to that body of knowledge by finding ethnographic stereotypes in the poetry of Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto*.[21] Epistolary studies also focus on prose text, both Greek and Latin letters, and although some detailed work has been done on Ovid's *Heroides*, little attention has been given to his last letters from exile.[22]

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[21] Ethnopgraphy in the ancient world see: Thomas, R.F., *Lands and People in Roman Poetry, The Ethnographic Tradition*, Cambridge, 1982; Romm, J.S., *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1992; Syme, R., *History in Ovid*, Oxford, 1978; Deacon, M., *Scientists and the Sea, 1650-1900*, London, 1971. For general work on anthropology see: Geertz, Clifford, *Works and Lives, The Anthropologist as Author*, California, 1988; and for ancient anthropology and archeaolgy see: Gimbutas, Marija, *The Language of the Goddess*, London, 1989; and MacKendrick, P., *The Dacian Stones Speak*, Chapel Hill, 1975. For scholarship on ethnography in Homer's *Odyssey*, see: Dougherty, Carol, *The Raft of Odysseus: The Ethnographic Imagination of Homer's Odyssey*, Oxford, 2001 and Malkin, Irad, *The Retuns of Odysseus: Colonization and Ethnicity*, Berkley: University of California Press, 1998.

[22] For general works on Epistolarity: Altman, J. G., *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form*, Columbus, 1982; Barthes, Roland, *A Lover's Discourse, Fragments*, New York, 1978; Derrida, J., *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, A. Bass, (tr.) Chicago, 1987; Kauffman, L.S., *Discourses of Desire: Gender, Genre, and Epistolary Fictions*, Ithaca, 1986; Kauffman, L.S., *Special Delivery: Epistolary Modes in Modern Fiction*, Chicago, 1992 and Benstock, Shari, 'From Letters to Literature: *La Carte Postale* in the Epistolary

Most scholarship on the persona is in relation to fairly modern texts, with little work done on applying the concept to ancient texts, so in this thesis I look at how the use of the poet's name and the names of Roman citizens affects our perception of a literary persona the *Epistulae ex Ponto*.[23]

In Chapter One, I show how the poet's ethnocentric view of the world, a view that privileges Rome as the centre, with an accepted polarity between Rome and the rest of the world, is both reinforced and challenged by exile. In *ex Ponto* 4.10, the poet follows a tradition of literary differences, as he compares his endurance to well known durable objects and contrasts his sufferings in exile with those suffered by Ulysses. An ethnocentric point of view is also evident in *ex Ponto* 4.2 where the poet measures the people and place of his exile against his friends in distant Rome and judges his latest poetry against that which he wrote before exile. He makes his appeal for sympathy and support stronger by using poetic language and agricultural imagery which is easily understood and appreciated by his urban friends, and which also accentuates the disparity

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Genre', *Genre*, XVIII, 257-295, 1985. For work on epistolarity in ancient texts see especially: Rosenmayer, P.A., *Ancient Epistolary Theory*, Cambridge, 2001; Rosenmeyer, P.A., 'Love Letters in Callimachus, Ovid and Aristaenetus or the Sad Fate of the Mailorder Bride', *Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici*, 36, 9-31, 1996; Kennedy, D.F., 'The Epistolary Mode and the First of Ovid's *Heroides*', *Classical Quarterly*, 34, 413-422, 1984; Kennedy, D.F., 'Epistolarity: The *Heroides*', *Cambridge Companion to Ovid*, P. Hardie, (ed) Cambridge, 2002; Farrell, J., 'Reading and writing the *Heroides*', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 98, 307-38, 1998; Knox, P., (ed) *Ovid: Heroides. Select Epistles*, Cambridge, 1995; Putnam, M.J., 'From Lyric to Letter: Iccius in Horace *Odes* 1.29 and Epistles 1.12', *Arethusa*, 28:2, 193-208, 1995; Rosenmeyer, P.A., 'Ovid's *Heroides* and *Tristia*: Voices from Exile', *Ramus*, 26:1, 29-56, 1997.

[23] For scholarship on the modern theory of the persona see: Elliott, R.C., *The Literary Persona*, Chicago, 1982; Sullivan, J.P., 'Introduction' *Modern Critical Theory and Classical Literature*, I. De Jong and J.P. Sullivan (eds) Leiden, 1994; Wyke, M., 'In Pursuit of Love, the Poetic Self and a Process of Reading Augustan Elegy in the 1980s', *Journal of Roman Studies*, 79, 165-173, 1989 and Martindale, C., *Redeeming the text. Latin Poetry and the hermeneutics of reception*, Cambridge, 1993. For work on an ancient concept of the persona see: Clay, Diskin, 'The Theory of the Literary Persona in Antiquity', *Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici*. 40, 9-40, 1998; Mayer, Roland G., 'Persona<l> Problems', *Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici*, 50, 55-80, 2003 and Hardie, Philip, *Ovid's Poetics of Illusion*, 2002.

between civilised pursuits of poetry writing and cultivation and the warlike barbarian world he now inhabits. The poet undercuts a purely ethnocentric view of the world in *ex Ponto* 4.10 with an emphasis on geographical detail and his first-hand experience (and explanation) for the phenomenon of the sea freezing, which seems to privilege his new location at the edge of the world over the centre. Although the poet suggests this new way of reading the foreign and exotic world of exile, his subjective first-person narrative shows that his location, so far from Rome, profoundly influences his sense of self and his poetry.

In Chapter Two, I argue that the letter form or the epistolarity of the *Epistulae ex Ponto* must influence our understanding of these poems. I argue that the letter form is used to bridge the distance caused by exile and also, because of the time elapsed in exile, the poet uses the private or personally subjective letter for his public verse to add tension to the poetry in order to reinforce his appeal for sympathy and help from his friends in Rome. I compare Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto* with the verse letters of Horace, Propertius and his own *Heroides*, finding epistolary properties in each to show how such properties make poetry written in the form of letters more personal and persuasive. Although epistolary theory is most often applied to modern prose texts, I show that it can be applied to ancient verse as well, especially to Ovid's last letters from exile. The formal characteristics of a letter are prominent in the last poems from exile and a close reading of *ex Ponto* 1.2 shows that Ovid both adheres to and departs from them in order to emphasize his dislocation from Rome and to make his appeal for relocation more persuasive.

In Chapter Three, I show how the poet's use of his own name in these letters seems to add autobiographical and historical detail which affects our perception of the ancient persona in relation to Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto*. I argue that the narrative voice of the poet is emphasized through terms such as *crede mihi*, and the poet's self referential use of *uates* for poet-prophet. I look at *ex Ponto* 3.3 as an example of dream vision poetry where the dreamer persona is fused with the voice of the exiled poet and letter writer. I argue that an increased use of his own name, Naso, the letter form, and frequent reference to his own poetry, all serve to blur the distinction between the author of the poems and the voice heard in them because the poet needs to identify himself unambiguously from his distant location in exile.

In Chapter Four, I argue that the condition of exile causes the written word to become the poet's only means of communication. The poet blends two genres, the public elegiac and the personal epistolary, and openly names his friends in order to encourage them to respond and petition the emperor on his behalf to have his place of exile changed. By giving the recipient-persona in these letters a well known name, one that can be associated immediately with someone prominent in either political or literary circles in Rome, the poet makes the sentiments expressed in the poems very personal but when the duty or obligation of a named individual becomes common knowledge through publication as verse, the poet's appeal for help may be reinforced by that person's wish for public approval or fear of public censure. The poet's use of so many names of prominent Roman identities in these letters is innovative and is a response to the length of time he is absent from Rome. Names reveal the status of those well-known family members in Rome who

are able to appeal to the emperor on behalf of the poet, as well as affiliations and connections between families within the Roman society. I show that when the poet addresses more than one letter to a friend, Graecinus, the repetition of the name makes a connection between poems and this allows a clearer picture to be built up of the individual so named.

I conclude that the poems of the *Epistulae ex Ponto* should be read with the poet's exile firmly in mind. The distance of exile necessitates the use of letters in place of spoken words, so an awareness of literary devices such as ethnographic stereotypes, epistolarity and emphasis on the author and recipient of these letters rather than poetic personae, enhances our understanding of how these poems are crafted in response to the poet's distance from Rome.

Chapter One

Ethnography in Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto*.

In this chapter I argue that Ovid's experience and place of exile is so different from his previous way of life in Rome, that it becomes the subject matter for his last two major collections of poetry, *Tristia* and his *Epistulae ex Ponto.* I look closely at some of the verse letters of the *Epistulae ex Ponto* to show how Ovid overcomes the difficulty of describing his unfamiliar status and place of exile. Because the poet is so far from Rome, he uses terms and traditions 'known' to his readers to illustrate the 'unknown' and writes about his distant place of exile using traditional ethnographic language. The poet describes Tomis as he experiences it living in exile and Rome as he imagines it to be in his absence. Such descriptions depend on comparisons and contrast: the dichotomy set up between Rome and Tomis is an understood polarity with all things Roman good and all things Tomitan bad.[1] This opposition permeates Ovid's exile poetry which shows Rome as central, in spite of his distance from it, while his location at the end of the world, Tomis, is always unfavourably compared with the poet's home city. He compares civilized city pursuits, 'the advantage of city life' (*urbanae commoda uitae, Pont.*1.8.29) with a place without cultivation and continually at war, where 'the barbarian enemy suffers not the soil to be turned' (*non patitur uerti barbarus hostis humum. Pont*. 2.7.67-70). Distance from Rome has a profound impact on the poet which we see as he writes, 'the end of the earth, the end of the world holds me' (*ultima me tellus, ultimus orbis habet, Pont.* 2.7.66).

[1] Ovid establishes this contrast between Rome and his place of exile in his earlier exile poem, *Tristia* 1.3.61 and again in *Epistulae ex Ponto* when he writes: 'What is better than Rome? What is worse than the cold of Scythia?' (*quid melius Roma? Scythio quid frigore peius? Pont*.1.3.37).

The subject matter of the poems comes from his status and place of exile and Ovid describes his location from the point of view of a sophisticated Roman poet and an exile far from home. His feelings are described using fictitious or literary examples and he writes how he hates the place, using the poetic language of impossibilities.

> gramina cultus ager, frigus minus odit hirundo,
> proxima Marticolis quam loca Naso Getis. (*Pont.* 4.14.13-14)
>
> The cultivated field hates the grass less, the swallow hates the cold less than Naso hates this land of the nearby war-loving Getans.

This couplet encapsulates some of the elements that make Ovid's place of exile so different from Rome. His choice of comparisons, a cultivated field opposed to unkempt grass, a city dwelling swallow opposed to the cold and the poet (Naso) opposed to the barbarian tribe who love war, reveals an urban poet's point of view, as he uses language and images easily understood by his fellow Romans. Take for instance the adjective 'war-loving', *Marticolis*: the word, coined by Ovid, is an example of syncretism, as the name of the Roman war-god Mars is superimposed onto the culture of the barbarian Getae.[2] The term implies an over-zealous regard for war making the place where the Getae live very dangerous in comparison to Rome and revealing the ethnocentric view point of the poet.

This way of explaining the rest of the world in relation to Rome and the Roman people was adopted from Greek patterns (as Latin literature also grew from the ancient Greek canon)

[2] Ovid has used the word before of the Getae, at *Tristia* 5.3.22 and Green, P. *Ovid, The Poems of Exile*, 1994, p. 89, translates it as 'war-mad' rather than 'Mars-worshipping' to accentuate the ferocity of the 'Goths' in comparison to Romans. There is a degree of ambiguity in the term: applied to a Roman citizen the term would be fitting but applied to the barbarians it can only be derogatory or at best establish that they may be a worthy enemy. The unlikely combination of 'Mars' for 'war' and 'love' or 'worship' in one descriptive word brings to mind his earlier erotic elegies, especially his *Ars Amatoria* as well as his use of another compound word from Mars, 'Mars-born' to describe Romulus or the twins (*Martigenae, Amores* 3.4.39 and *Martigenam, Fasti* 1.199) in an equally culture-specific fashion.

and Greek authors such as Herodotus.[3] According to this tradition the elements necessary to describe a place followed a set formula. Thomas (1982) neatly summarizes this when he writes that ethnography 'comprises the following elements: 1) Physical geography of the area 2) Climate 3) Agricultural produce, mineral resources, etc. 4) Origins and features of the inhabitants 5) Political, social and military organization'.[4] Ovid summarizes these elements into a shorthand reference, a recurring litany of disadvantages (no trees, the cold climate and war-like barbarians) to convey his experience of exile. He draws on a common knowledge of Rome in relation to the rest of the world to describe his place of exile and uses what is generally known about the world, derived from geographical texts and maps as well as ethnographical stereotypes in literature, to illustrate his new and unfamiliar location.

Described or verbal maps in ancient geographies and the idea of drawn maps or pictured representations of the world are attested in ancient literature.[5] Claude Nicolet (1991) in his excellent book, *Space, Geography and Politics in the Early Roman Empire*, writes:

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[3] See also Eratosthenes of Cyrene (2nd Century B.C.) and Artemidorus of Ephesus (1st Century B.C) as examples of ancient geographers who write of one place or peoples measured against the next on the coastlines or along rivers to form a continuum or itinerary and this way of describing the world is still being used at the end of the first century A.D. by Tacitus in his *Germania*.

[4] Thomas, R.F., *Lands and People in Roman Poetry, the Ethnographic Tradition*, Cambridge, 1982, p. 1-2, writes: 'ethnographical writing is one of the most enduring in classical literature'. He bases the tradition on 'Hippocratic theories' found in '*Airs, Waters, Places,*'. See Jones, W.H.S. (tr) *Hippocrates: Airs, Waters, Places*, Cambridge Mass., 1972, pp. 66. Jones writes that: 'the second part of the work is scarcely medical at all, but rather ethnographical. It bears a close resemblance to certain parts of Herodotus ...'

[5] de Sélincourt, A., (tr) *Herodotus: The Histories*, Harmondsworth, 1954, pp. 253-4. Herodotus wrotes: 'I cannot help laughing at the absurdity of all the map makers – and there are plenty of them – who show Ocean running like a river round a perfectly circular earth with Asia and Europe the same size'. Jones, H.L., (tr) *The Geography of Strabo*, In Eight Volumes, Cambridge Mass., 1949, p. 257. Strabo, discussing geographers and maps, writes: '...so these two men, at least, make such a statement, and the early maps agree with them. It is an incredible thing, of course, he thinks, that we have to trust Patrocles alone, in disregard of those whose testimony is so strong against him, and to correct the early maps throughout as regards the very point of issue, instead of leaving them as they are until we have more trustworthy information about them'. (2.1.4).

> Anaximander, ca. 550 B.C. ... is credited with the first map, the prototype of those "Ionian maps" or "old maps" of which Strabo ... speak[s] five centuries later, and which Herodotus (4.36) ... criticized. [6]

A common form of representing space is the itinerary or route map used by the ancient Romans. The Peutinger Table is a medieval copy of an ancient map in the form of a route or itinerary map (about 13 inches wide but over 22 feet long). This map dates from the 12th or early 13th Century and is possibly a copy of a 4th Century Roman map or, as it lists cities destroyed by Vesuvius, it may have had a 1st Century predecessor.[7] It is a schematic picture of the Roman road system, with lines showing roads, the names of cities, towns and other stopping places. In the way of a traditional itinerary Ovid lists the names of places on his journey from Rome to Tomis, by way of the isthmus at Corinth (*Tr.* 1.10.9) to the Hellespont and up the western shore of the Black Sea to the colony of Greek Miletus, 'the Milesian city' (*Miletida … urbem Tr.* 1.10.41). In this poem the poet reveals his progression from the city he knows and shares with his friends, through a well known shipping and travel route to the Hellespont, famous in Greek and Roman literature and on to Tomis on the Black Sea,[8] largely unknown in Rome, except as a Greek colony, a source of salt fish and slaves.

Although the world in ancient times was considered to be a globe, portrayed as such on coins and sculptures, and referred to by the words *orbis terrarum*, it was described in terms

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[6] Nicolet, Claude, *Space, Geography, and Politics in the Early Roman Empire*, Ann Arbor, 1991, p. 59, writes: 'Furthermore, these were "speaking" maps, or maps accompanied by texts as is shown by the ambiguity of the terms that describe them ...'.

[7] Dilke, O.A.W., *Greek and Roman Maps*, London, 1985, p. 113.

[8] West, Stephanie, ''The Most Marvelous of all Seas'; The Greek Encounter with the Euxine' *Greece and Rome*, 50.2, 151-167, 2003, who gives an overview of the ancient Greek response to the size of the Black Sea; the difficulties of entering it against a strong current; the dangers of navigation in a vast area without islands; the change of name from 'inhospitable' *axeinos* to 'hospitable' *euexinos*, citing Ovid's *Tristia* 4.4.55f; and suggests that the change followed the establishment of colonies.

of those places known as habitable. No flat, geographical, drawn or painted maps are extant from the time of Augustus, however 'Agrippa's Map' in the *Porticus Vipsania* (re-drawn in modern times from descriptions of it in ancient texts) and fragments of the map of the city of Rome, *Forma Urbis Romae*, attest to a common knowledge of maps and map-making in Augustan Rome.[9] Nicolet (1991)[10] sees Augustus' *Res Gestae*, as a public verbal description of the conquered world and links it with Agrippa's visual representation of the known world, the first attested public map. All maps, whether verbal or pictorial have Rome and the area surrounding it in detail which becomes sparser as the places are less well known. A world view with Rome as the centre, having the perfect climate and therefore the best agriculture, people and civilization, makes all other places less than perfect and the extremes, through heat or cold, to be almost uninhabitable except by a few uncivilized nomadic barbarians.[11] Ovid's poems in the *Epistulae ex Ponto* are a conventional response to the poet's extreme isolation in the remoteness of exile and his distance from Rome. They are an attempt by the poet to reconcile his feelings about the experience of the climate, resources and inhabitants in his place of exile, with the imagined response, feelings and location of the recipient of his letters. Ovid relies on his reader's

[9] See reference to a 'painted map' in Propertius 4.3.36, discussed further in my Chapter Two, p77.
[10] Nicolet, Claude, *Space, Geography, and Politics...* 1991, Chapter 1, p. 15ff and Chapter 5, p95ff.
[11] This is a view expressed by Vitruvius: 'Thus these things have been so positioned in the cosmos by nature and all nations made different to one another by their unequal composition. Within the area of the entire earthly globe and all regions at the centre of the cosmos, the Roman people has its territories. 11. The populations of Italy partake in equal measure of the qualities of both north and south, both with regard to their physiques and to the vigor of their minds, to produce the greatest strength'. (*On Architecture*, 6.1.10-11) Rowland, I.D., (tr) *Vitruvius, Ten Books on Architecture*, Cambridge, 1999, p. 77. Virgil writes on Italy's glories (*laudibus Italiae*): 'But neither Media's groves, land of wondrous wealth, nor beauteous Ganges, nor Hermus, thick with gold, may vie with Italy's glories – not Bactra, nor India, nor all Panchaea, rich in incense-bearing sand'. (*G.* 2.138-176) Fairclough, H. R., (tr) *Virgil: Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I-IV*, Cambridge, Mass., 1967. Horace also praises Italy: 'whereby the Latin name and the might of Italy waxed great, and the fame and majesty of our dominion were spread from the sun's western bed to his arising' (*Carmina* 4.15.13-16) Bennett, C.E., (tr) *Horace, The Odes and Epodes*, Cambridge, Mass., 1978.

knowledge of geography and literature as well as cultural and geographical stereotypes to overcome the problem of describing his distant place of exile.

In Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto* the letter form of each poem emphasizes geographic space, for it is understood that a letter is usually penned to bridge the physical distance between a writer and the intended recipient. The poet's descriptions in these letters, both of his place of exile and the place imagined as his letter's destination, lend support to this emphasis. Ovid's place of exile is, however, much more than a geographic position. Although the poet is at pains to locate himself by well known place names like the Black Sea (*Pontus Euxinus*), the famous river Hister, the town of Tomis, as well as by the name of the main barbarian tribe living in the area, the Getae, there is little specific description of the place and these verse letters resist a purely geographical reading. The geographical detail in these poems seems to be ancillary to the poet's subjective depiction of the feelings and experiences he has in exile. As a poet he is concerned with language and literature so most reference to his physical location is overlaid with literary allusion which has the effect of making these verse letters complex and intriguing. The poet draws on a heritage of knowledge derived from literature in order to be easily understood which would, perhaps, ensure that his poems are read and enjoyed by his sophisticated friends. By setting his new knowledge and experience to resonate with the traditional and well known he makes his appeal to his friends, for support and intervention on his behalf, much stronger.

Juxtaposition of allusion with a factual, reasoned explanation is most obvious in *ex Ponto* 4.10 where the poet explains the phenomenon of the sea freezing. Although an unlikely

subject for an elegiac letter, this explanation emphasizes that the poet's place of exile is to be measured against the known world, both the physical world and the familiar world of literature. In an earlier poem, *Tristia* 3.10, the poet describes the frozen sea or river to stress the unusually harsh climate he suffers and to emphasize the added danger he is in, when the enemy is no longer kept outside the town by the flowing waters of the Hister River. The effect of the cold on the waters of the river and sea is described with wonder and amazement by a poet accustomed to the temperate climate of Rome. In *Tristia* 3.10, in order to give more weight to his first-hand experience of the frozen waters of river and sea, the poet alludes to Virgil's description of the effect of extreme cold on rivers, wine and the Scythians' beards, with the rhetorical question 'why tell of brooks frozen fast with cold,' (*quid loquar, ut uincti concrescant frigore rivi, Tr.* 3.10.25).[12] Most of his readers would be familiar with the effects of freezing temperatures and being well-read, would also be familiar with literary descriptions, especially the passage of Virgil to which he alludes.[13]

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[12] See especially *Tristia* 3.10, but mention is also made of the frozen sea at *Tr.* 5.10.2 and *Pont.* 3.1.15-16 and 4.9.86. Ovid is saying in effect 'why tell (<u>like Virgil does</u>)…' because the content of his passage resembles that of Virgil's *Georgics* 3 and Virgil also had commenced his digression on extremes of climate with a similar 'Alexandrian footnote' when he writes: 'Why follow up for you in song' …*Quid … versu / prosequar…*(*G.* 3.339-340). See Hinds, S., 'Generalizing about Ovid' *The Imperial Muse*, A. J. Boyle (ed) *Ramus*, Australia, 1988, p. 1-3 on Ross's 'Alexandrian footnote'.

[13] Ovid's description of the effects of the cold in *Tr.* 3.10 bears a striking resemblance to Virgil's *Georgics* and also Herodotus' depiction of the Scythians (4.28). As Helzle, M., *Publii Ovidii Nasonis Epistularum ex Ponto liber IV*, Zurich & New York, 1989, p. 106, observes: 'Before Ovid, Scythia had always been a product of an author's imagination…. For Ovid, however, the poetic topos had become reality and distant Rome almost imaginary'. See also Williams, G.D., *Banished Voices*, Cambridge, 1994, p. 1-49 on this point.

Herodotus writes: The whole region I have been describing has excessively hard winters; for eight months in the year the cold is intolerable; the ground is frozen iron-hard, so that, to turn earth into mud requires not water but fire. The sea freezes over, the whole of the Cimmerian Bosphorus; and the Scythians, make war upon the ice, and drive wagons across it to the country of the Sindi. (de Sélincourt, tr. 1954).

Virgil writes, *Georgics* 3.360 – 383: Sudden ice-crusts form on the running stream, and anon the water bears on its surface iron-bound wheels – giving welcome once to ships, now to broad wagons! Everywhere brass splits, clothes freeze on the back, and with axes they cleave the liquid wine; whole lakes turn into a solid mass and the rough icicle hardens on the unkempt beard. No less, meanwhile, does the snow fill the sky…. Such is the race of men lying under the wain's seven stars in the far north, a wild race, buffeted by the Rhipaean East wind, their bodies clothed in the tawny furs of beasts. (H. R. Fairclough, tr. 1967).

Ovid writes at *Tristia* 3.10.19-26 … 31-34: With skins and stitched breeches they keep out the evils of the cold; of the whole body the face alone is exposed. Often their hairs sound with the movement of hanging ice

The poems *Tristia* 3.10 and *ex Ponto* 4.10 have much in common and are the only poems in the collection sent from the Black Sea where an attempt is made by the poet to write a detailed description of the frozen waters of sea and river to convey his first hand experience of this novel situation. In both poems the factual account is mingled with literary allusion as the poet attempts to explain an unknown phenomenon with the aid of common knowledge available from literature. In *ex Ponto* 4.10 his description of the frozen sea follows another literary reference, an elaborate comparison drawn between the sufferings of the poet himself and those of Homer's famous suffering wanderer, Odysseus. Although his descriptions of the frozen sea and the hardships he suffers purport to be an objective eye-witness account, the clear allusion to a literary tradition stresses the subjectivity of the poet's point of view as well as underlining the poet's attempt to convey new knowledge in an understandable way. Although the poet is telling of his own experiences, which are so unusual in this distant and hostile place, he uses literary allusion in order to be understood by the people to whom he appeals for help in his letters; help to be recalled or moved to a less harsh place of exile.

In Ovid's letters from exile, the elements of hardship and discomfort are repeated so often they become a formulaic tricolon: no trees or cultivation, danger from the arrows of

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and their beards gleam white, covered with frost. Uncovered wine stands firm, keeping the share of the jar, and they drink not draughts of pure wine but shards given them. Why tell of brooks hardened by the bonds of cold and about brittle water being dug up from lakes? …. Where ships have gone before, now men go on foot and the hooves of a horse pound the wave congealed with cold and over these new bridges, while the waves glide beneath, Samartian oxen draw the carts of Barbarians. (my translation)

Virgil draws attention to the moderate climate of Rome. Ovid alludes to this passage to draw attention, not only to the hardships he suffers in exile so far from Rome but also to his own physical, rather than literary experience.

barbarians and extreme cold.[14] In *ex Ponto* 4.10, the poet writes his customary description of his situation:

> hic agri infrondes, hic spicula tincta uenenis,
> hic freta uel pediti peruia reddit hiems,
> ut, qua remus iter pulsis modo fecerat undis,
> siccus contempta naue uiator eat. (*Pont.* 4.10.31-4)
>
> Here are leafless lands, here arrows steeped in poisons, here winter ever makes a path on the sea for the walker, so that where oars just now made way, beating the waves, the traveller may go dry, contemptuous of boats.

The third element of hardship (extreme cold) is elaborated, with the addition of an extra couplet, to describe the effect of winter on the sea, even though the poet is experiencing summer (*aestas*, *Pont.* 4.10.1) as he opens this particular letter. This passage recalls the poet's previous description (*Tr.* 3.10) with its imagery of boats and walkers;

> quaque rates ierant, pedibus nunc itur, et undas
> frigore concretas ungula pulsat equi. (*Tr.* 3.10.31-2)
>
> Where ships had gone before, now men go on foot and the waters congealed with cold feel the hoof-beats of the horse.

It also calls to mind his previous appeal for credence; the poet has not only seen but has walked on frozen water:

> nec uidisse sat est; durum calcauimus aequor,
> undaque non udo sub pede summa fuit. (*Tr.* 3.10.39-40)
>
> And seeing is not enough; I have trodden the frozen sea and the wave top was under an un-wet foot.

The ascending tricolon in *ex Ponto* 4.10 sets the scene for a factual explanation of the phenomenon of the sea freezing. The poet offers an explanation for what he has seen, fuller and more detailed than the simple, yet vivid description of the shell of ice covering the

[14] For repetition of one or all of these three, no trees or agriculture, extreme cold and the danger from the arrows of the barbarian, see *Pont.* 1.2.13-23; 1.3.51-5; 1.3.57-60; 1.6.9-12; 1.8.5; 2.1.65; 2.2.94; 2.3.2; 2.5.19; 2.7.68; 2.10.44-8; 3.1.1-28; 3.7.33-4; 3.8.5-18; 4.2.2; 4.3.51-2; 4.7.7-12; 4.8.83-4; 4.9.81-6; 4.12.33-6; 4.14.27-8.

river (*Tr*. 3.10.30) and living fish encased in ice in the sea (*Tr*. 3.10.49). The explanation is given in an earnest endeavor to teach his friends more about his place of exile. He writes:

> qui ueniunt istinc uix uos ea credere dicunt.
> quam miser est qui fert asperiora fide!
> crede tamen, nec te causas nescire sinemus
> horrida Sarmaticum cur mare duret hiems. (*Pont.* 4.10.35-8)
>
> Those who come from there report that you scarcely believe all this. How wretched is he who bears what is too harsh for belief! Yet you must believe! Nor shall I allow you to be ignorant of the reason why rough winter hardens the Sarmatian sea.

His explanation is given as further proof of his credibility in the face of the reported scepticism of friends in Rome. What was previously a simple egocentric view of the world understood as an opposition between 'the poet' and 'others'; 'here' and 'there'; 'Rome' and 'the rest of the world'; becomes more complex for the poet after exile. 'Here' is no longer Rome, the poet's 'here' is now this foreign shore and 'there' (*istinc, Pont.* 4.10.35) is the Rome of his friends and fellow poets. Because the poet's self-centered point of view has not changed, there is an added tension to his descriptions as his egocentric view, privileging the new location, vies with his ethnocentric Roman view of the world. Although his self-centered stance may stress the importance and interest of his new location to his intended reader, the poet's view remains ethnocentric, ranking things Roman higher than all others as he usually describes the people and the place in a derogatory way as the edge of the civilized world. The poet always emphasizes the contrast between Rome and his place of exile, maybe even exaggerating the difference in order to evoke sympathy in his friends in Rome.

Because the poet's rational explanation of the sea freezing is embedded in the poem and enclosed by references to myth and fable associated with the distant location of his place of

exile, his credibility is thrown into doubt. While the letter form of these verse-epistles stresses the first-hand factual account of the writer, it also leaves the information open to doubt because the distance between the writer and the reader prevents easy corroboration of the 'facts' presented.[15] The poet's need to overcome doubt is the driving force behind this poem as he attempts to convey his unusual situation to his friends so far away in Rome. Through a mixture of literary allusion, creativity and an eye-witness account, the poet blends fact and myth in an intriguing verse letter in order to promote understanding and sympathy in the recipient of this letter.

From the opening of the poem it is obvious that the poet is concerned that his place of exile cannot be understood by his friends in Rome. The poet emphasizes at the outset the temporal and physical distance which separates him from the recipient of this letter, his friend Albinovanus:

> haec mihi Cimmerio bis tertia ducitur aestas
> litore pellitos inter agenda Getas.
> ecquos tu silices, ecquod, carissime, ferrum
> duritiae confers, Albinouane, meae?
> gutta cauat lapidem, consumitur anulus usu,
> atteritur pressa uomer aduncus humo.
> tempus edax igitur praeter nos omnia perdet:
> cessat duritia mors quoque uicta mea. (*Pont.* 4.10.1-8)
>
> This sixth summer is being passed by me on the Cimmerian shore, spent among the skin clad Getae. Can you compare any flint, any iron, dear Albinovanus, to my endurance? Drops hollow out stone, a ring is worn away with use and the curved plough-share is ground down by compressed soil. Devouring time, therefore, will destroy all things, except me: even death ceases, overcome by my endurance.

Temporal distance or time is measured by the poet's experience of summer: this is the sixth summer 'being spent' (*ducitur*, *Pont.* 4.10.1) on a foreign shore so the passive voice

[15] All letters inform the recipient of things they could not know otherwise because of the distance which separates writer and recipient. Letters, however are not considered didactic in the same way that Ovid's earlier elegy, his *Ars Amatoria,*and *Remedia Amoris* or Virgil's *Georgics* are seen as didactic poems.

of the verb underlines the passage of time over which the poet has no control and the negative effect this has on the poet's life. This self-centered point of view is intrinsic to the letter form as the writer has only his own imagination to sustain the illusion of a dialogue with an absent recipient. When the poet asserts that 'even death ceases, overcome by my endurance' (*cessat duritia mors quoque uicta mea, Pont.* 4.10.8) his total pre-occupation with self is evident. The imagery, in the first section of *ex Ponto* 4.10.5-38, is an example of Ovid's particular form of literary self-consciousness. With a well-used list of hard things being worn away over time (*Pont.* 4.10.5-7) the poet is alluding to other writers who have used these examples, as well as making reference to his own previous writing.[16] Hinds (1988) writing about Ovid's self-referential elaboration of allusion in *Tristia* 5.3 (an earlier poem which also explores the contrast between the poet's life in Rome and his distant place of exile) says:

> In *Tristia* 5.3.9-11 we encounter an element of poetic self-reference associated with one of those rich seams of imagery in which Roman writers debate aesthetic principles derived (with many complications along the way) from Callimachus. The allusion to that imagery here may seem casual and off-hand: but it has something important to tell us about the place of literary self-consciousness in Ovid's life and experience.[17]

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[16] Lucretius, to explain the presence of the tiny particles which make up matter, writes of the same three items being worn away; 'A ring on the finger is thinned underneath by wear, the fall of dripping water hollows a stone, the curved ploughshare of iron imperceptibly dwindles away in the fields' (*anulus in digito subter tenuatur habendo,/ stilicidi causus lapidem cauat, uncus aratri / ferreus occulto decrescit uomer in aruis, DRN,* 1.312-314); and uses the same imagery to describe how habit like 'drops falling on a stone' (*guttas in saxa cadentis, DRN,* 4.1286) breeds love. Rouse, W.H.D., (tr) *Lucretius, De Rerum Natura,* Cambridge, Mass., 1975. Ovid also writes of 'decaying time consuming iron and stone' (*tabida consumit ferrum lapidemque uetustas, Pont.* 4.8.49 while Horace writes that 'no eroding rain' (*…non imber edax, Carm.* 3.30.3) can destroy the memorial of his poetry. Ovid has written of these three items before - the plough, a ring and stone, being worn away by time (*A.A.* 1.473-77); varied to the rock, the plough and the road being worn, (*Pont.* 2.7.39-44); he writes of poetry and fame living on or enduring while the ploughshare and flint are worn away (*Am.*1.15); and his fame outlasting death (*Met.*15.871-9; *Pont.* 3.2.29-30; 4.8.47-51); but at *Tr.* 4.6, it is his woes which multiply and wear him down, only his death can stop them.

[17] Hinds, S., 'Generalising about Ovid', 1988, pp. 21-3, suggests that in exile Ovid's 'nostalgic memory' of former celebrations among Roman poets (see also *Tr.* 5.3.47-52) 'is also a *literary* memory' – referring to his *Fasti* 3.713-4 – and that the 'vocabulary' contrasting the poet's earlier life and his life is exile also 'hints at a contrast between two ways of *writing*'. He suggests that the poet's descriptions of Pontus show 'how his exile actually impinges on Ovid's consciousness: as an absence of literary friends, a separation from congenial pursuits, as an impediment to poetic inspiration – and perhaps as a feeling of resentment against the emperor whose poor moral and artistic sense put him there'.

In *ex Ponto* 4.10, as in many of the exile poems, the poet's self-referential allusions highlight his particularly literary form of self-consciousness. Hinds also writes:

> The Callimachean vocabulary of self-reference is nothing less than a code through which the Augustan poet expresses his vision – his atypical, poetic vision – of the world at large.[18]

The self-centered point of view which he previously held as a popular poet in Rome is not diminished by his distant location but his engagement with ideas of distance, boundaries and change is fostered by his place and state of exile at the edge of the world. The stone, ring, and ploughshare, objects chosen by the poet as examples of hard things that eventually wear away, are self-referential. These objects can also be seen as examples of the civilization he has left behind, the stone as elemental nature, the ring as a symbol of culture and art and the ploughshare as a signifier for agriculture and cultivation.

In *ex Ponto* 4.10, the poet's attempts to stress the importance of his first-hand experience necessarily privilege his current location over the place from which he has come. From an ethnographic standpoint, this emphasis on first-hand experience or 'being there' is an important way for the poet to convince his readers that if they were there they too would see and feel what he is describing. This way of writing personal observations to add authenticity has been used before, especially by Herodotus.[19] It continues to influence the manner of anthropological writing to the present day.[20] Ovid attempts to teach why the sea

[18] Hinds, 'Generalising about Ovid', 1988, p 23, suggests that Ovid's experience of exile is discussed in a vocabulary which recalls the way he thought and wrote about it in earlier poetry.

[19] Herodotus takes pains to indicate that his is an eye-witness account or that he has heard the story from a reputable source. See, however Fehling, Detlev, *Herodotus and his 'Sources'*, Leeds, 1989, for an overview of the scholarship on Herodotus' sources and his interpretation of 'Herodotus' source citations as 'free literary creations'. p. 9.

[20] See Geertz, Clifford, *Works and Lives, The Anthropologist as Author*, California, 1988, on what he calls 'sociocultural anthropology', intro, v, and the difficulty anthropologists have in avoiding charges of

freezes, by explaining what he has learned through living at the edge of the world, in order to dispel the ignorance in his friends in Rome. Before introducing new information the poet re-iterates what is already known. He points out that the well known directional markers of the north are near him, the cold northern constellation 'the wain or great Bear' (*plaustri, Pont.* 4.10.39) and the North wind, strong because 'from here Boreas is born' (*Hinc oritur Boreas, Pont.* 4.10.41). The warm South wind (*Notus, Pont.* 4.10.43) is described by the poet as 'rare and weaker' (*rarus languidiorque, Pont.* 4.10.44) to emphasize his remote location a long way from such a mild and warm place as Rome. Reminding his reader, both the recipient of his letter and his intended wider audience in Rome of the common-place and obvious, the poet establishes a base of common knowledge to which he now can add something new. The new idea is introduced in one couplet:

> adde quod hic clauso miscentur flumina Ponto
> uimque fretum multo perdit ab amne suam. (*Pont.* 4.10.45-6)
>
> Add to this, here the rivers are being mixed with the enclosed Pontus and from many a stream the sea loses its own strength.

This couplet is transitional as it continues to allude to common knowledge (that motionless fresh water freezes) by describing the sea as enclosed and therefore not flowing, before adding the new information that it is less salty because of the addition of great quantities of fresh river water.

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ethnocentricity. He goes on to say, p. 16, that whatever method anthropologists use they still need to convince us that not only have they 'been there' but that, had we been there we would have had the same experience.

From this point the poet emphasizes knowledge specific to the area by listing many rivers by name, names that are largely unknown in Rome at the time.[21] The names are unusual and many are unattested in other extant ancient literature, although some can be traced back to the rivers Herodotus lists as flowing into the Black Sea.[22] Lists of names in catalogue form, however, are common in epic poetry and are also familiar to the poet's audience through exposure to triumphal lists and other inscriptions in the city of Rome.[23] The form lends an authenticity to this poem even though many of the names of the rivers are unknown to the general reader. Every new idea or piece of original information given by the poet is linked to and explained by some element of common knowledge already possessed by the reader, both the intended recipient of the letter and a wider audience of Roman citizens.

From a list of five largely unknown names in one line (*Pont.* 4.10.47) the passage on rivers becomes more allusive with references to events and locations in literature. Some have

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[21] Mayer, Roland, 'Geography and Roman Poets' *Greece and Rome*, 33.1, 47-54, 1986. Mayer, p. 54, writes: 'The new geographic knowledge, at least so far as the name of a tribe or river, was not scorned by the Roman poets as it had largely been by their Alexandrian models. Empire was too glamorous to resist and exotic names are freely introduced by proud poets. This was managed in the Augustan period tastefully for the most part. After Ovid the tendency to compose lists takes over and the silver epic is full of catalogues of place-names'.

[22] Herodotus, 4.48, writes about the many rivers flowing into the Black Sea and describes the general region. His list includes: Ister (or Danube); Tyras; Hypanis (or Bug); Borysthenes (or Dnieper); Panticapes, Hypacyris; Gherrus; and Tanais (or Don). He also lists the tributary rivers of the Danube and the source and quality of the others. Vitruvius refers to the rivers shown on maps and lists some by name (*on Architecture*, 8.2.6) and also refers to the variation of water quality in springs and rivers by mentioning the bitter Hypanis in Pontus, (*on Architecture*, 8.3.11) Rowland, I.D., (tr) *Vitruvius, Ten Books on Architecture*, Cambridge, 1999, pp. 98-100. See also West, Stephanie, ''The Most Marvelous of all Seas', 2003, p. 155-6, who comments that the six great rivers flowing into the Black Sea are in contrast to the absence of many major rivers flowing through the landform of mainland Greece.

[23] See especially the lists of names in *Res Gestae diui Augusti*: of buildings, 19-21; places conquered (pacified) 25-31; of kings who sought refuge 32. Shipley, F.R., (tr) *Velleius Paterculus, Compendium of Roman History, Res Gestae Diui Augusti*, Cambridge, Mass., 1967. See Feeney, D.C., 'History and Revelation in Vergil's Underworld', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*, 32, 1-24, 1986, p. 4, on Vergil's 'parade of heroes' as he makes the point that whereas a catalogue of great men is usually high panegyric, in Vergil's hands both the content and order of names calls this notion into question.

been so often used in literature that they have become a topos for either the place or the people associated with them. The Thermodon, addressed by name, 'and you, Thermodon, known to a squadron of women' (*et tu, femineae Thermodon cognite turmae, Pont.* 4.10.51) not only refers to the cold, northern country of the Amazons but also to the difference between these semi-mythical women warriors and the civilized Roman.[24] The 'Phasis once sought by Greek heroes' (*et quondam Graiis Phasi petite uiris, Pont*. 4.10.52) is another common marker of place, specifically Colchis, and has often been used by poets, including Ovid, as a literary way to refer to Medea.[25] Similarly the Danube signifies the cold north in contrast with the warm south of the Nile in many works of poetry and geography and both names identify places different to and distant from Rome. The poet substitutes an elaborate reference to place names for the name of one river when he writes: 'and that which separates two lands, Asia and that of the sister of Cadmus, and its course makes its way between the two' *(quique duas terras, Asiam Cadmique sororem,/ separat et cursus inter utramque facit, Pont.* 4.10. 55-6).[26] He assumes that his intended reader has the literary knowledge to unravel this reference to the Tanais, a river between Asia and Europe. It is uncertain how the poet learned the names of these rivers, but his grouping of such a number of otherwise unknown names may imply that this remote place has its own

[24]The 'squadron of women' (*Pont*. 4.10.51) could only be the Amazons and the Thermadon is mentioned by both Virgil (*A.* 11.659) and Propertius (3.14.14; 4.4.71) as the river of the Amazons. Ovid, as well as listing the Thermodon among the rivers dried up by Phaethon's misuse of his father's car, (*Met*. 2.249) also uses the name to stand for the Queen of the Amazons (*Met*. 9.189) or the Amazon warrior at Troy, (*Met*. 12.611).

[25]The river Phasis is the river in Colchis where the Phasian maiden, (*Pont.* 3.3.80) Medea was seen by Jason's men (*Pont.* 4.10.52). Virgil includes this river in a list of rivers shown to Aristaeus when he sought guidance from his mother the Nymph Cyrene on the death of his bees, (*G.* 4.367); Propertius uses the name to designate the place (1.20.18) and the river (3.22.11) and Ovid refers to the river (*Ep.* 12.10; *Met*. 2.249 and 7.6; *Tr.* 2.1.439; and *Pont.* 3.3.80) and often uses the name to signify Medea or her country, (*Ep.* 6.103, 108; 16.347; 19.176; *A.A.* 2.103, 382 and 3.33; *Rem.* 261; *Met.*7.298; *Fast*. 2.42).

[26] Cadmus' sister is known from myth as Europa, so the river referred to, known in ancient times as the Tanais, (see also *Tr.*3.4.49) and known today as the Don, flows between Europe and Asia.

rich fund of knowledge apart from and maybe rivaling that of Rome.[27] Because the poet is no longer living and writing in Rome, the Danube is given prominence over the Nile, which traditionally is the greatest river.[28] His changed location has caused him to view the world from a different perspective and this list of rivers may be an attempt to show that shift to his friends at home.

The poet's explanation (*Pont.* 4.10.59-64) of the sea freezing is an accurate account of the effect of fresh water on the waters of the Black Sea.[29] He writes:

> copia tot laticum, quas auget, adulterat undas
> nec patitur uires aequor habere suas.
> quin etiam stagno similis pigraeque paludi
> caeruleus uix est diluiturque color
> innatat unda freto dulcis leuiorque marina est,
> quae proprium mixto de sale pondus habet. (*Pont.* 4.10.59-64)

> The wealth of so much water adulterates the waves which it augments, nor is the sea allowed to have its own strength. Rather, like a dull and stagnant pool, the colour is scarcely blue, but is dilute. The sweet water floats on the sea and is lighter than the sea, which has weight of its own from the mixed salt.

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[27] It is hard to imagine the urban poet tramping throughout the region gathering first-hand information on river names but as an intelligent man, while learning the local language (*Pont.* 3.2.40) he could have picked up local knowledge about his place of exile, or maybe he simply fabricated the names, some from memory and some newly coined to emphasize the remoteness of his place of exile. The poet's personification of rivers is reminiscent of earlier lists of rivers in *Metamorphoses*, although there are few names in common unless we read *Penius* (*Pont.* 4.10.47) as *Peneus.* The rivers (*Met.* 1.568-87) Sperchios, Enipeus, Apidanus, Amphrysos and Aeas come to console Peneus on the loss of his daughter Daphne and this list is strikingly similar to those rivers from whose banks Medea collects magic herbs (*Met.* 7.228-232). The list of the rivers, dried up by Phaethon when he drove Phoebus' chariot so erratically, *(Met.* 2.241-259) has the most names in common with *Pont.* 4.10.47-58 and there are also some duplicated in the list of changing rivers given by Pythagoras (*Met.* 15.273-286). Virgil (*G.* 4.355-373) has Aristaeus, from the banks of the river Peneus, seek out the underwater realm of Cyrene in order to find a cure for the loss of his bees and he marvels at the rivers under the earth, Phasis, Lycus, Enipeus, Tibur, Anio, Hypanis, Mysian Caicus and Eridanus.

[28] Herodotus 4.48 writes that the Danube is the mightiest river in the known world which owes its great size to the number of tributaries which join it but that to compare the single stream of the Danube with that of the Nile then the latter is the greater of the two.

[29] Deacon, M., *Scientists and the Sea, 1650-1900*, London, 1971, pp. 3-4, writes that attempts have been made to account for the origin and nature of the sea from the sixth century B.C. when Greek 'scientists' abandoned mythological interpretations for explanations based on natural causes. Without accurate measurement and technical skill, variations of temperature, salinity and tides are hard to account for. She also writes that the discovery of ocean currents and separation of salt and less salt water of the Black sea was not observed and recorded till late 1600's by an Italian, Luigi Fernando Marsigli, pp. 147-9. See Ascherson, N. *Black Sea*, London, 1995, for a novel look at the history and science of the Black Sea.

He stages his explanation so that what is known can introduce a new idea. It is common knowledge that fresh water makes salt water less salty and that the colour of fresh water seems less blue but the poet then explains that fresh water is lighter than salt water and floats on top. His readers are to assume, therefore, that the top layer of the sea freezes like fresh water does.

The novelty of this new information is hard to grasp from a modern perspective but the poet makes a claim not evident in any other extant ancient source, a claim that was only a tentative theory in ancient texts. Lucretius, in his *de Rerum Natura*, is an obvious source, brought to mind by the allusion to wearing away iron earlier in the poem, yet Lucretius dismisses the 'great power of ice, that hardener of waters' (*et uis magna geli, magnum duramen aquarum, Lucr*. 6.530) as something everyone can understand if they understand the qualities of the elements.[30] Ancient writers have also written about the properties of the sea and about sweet or fresh water.[31] Lucretius tells of up-welling fresh water springs in the sea (*dulcis undas, Lucr.* 6.894) and how the sea level remains constant through particles being drawn up by the sun and wind and that the sea is joined through the porous earth to the rivers at their source (*Lucr*. 6.608-638 and 5.269-272). In a less quasi-scientific literary work, we see Virgil evoke as Muse, Arethusa, a fountain whose 'water would not

[30] Rouse, W.H.D., (tr) *Lucretius, De Rerum Natura*, Cambridge, Mass., 1975, p. 532 note *b*, 'Hail, snow, dew, frost and ice are explained (in that order) by Epicurus, *Ep ad Pyth.* 109-110.

[31] Deacon, *Scientists and the Sea, 1650-1900*, 1971, chapter 1, p3-19, explains well the ancient theories about rivers and the sea ascribed to Aristotle and others. In summary, the ancients held the idea that the process of evaporation and precipitation was a cycle, with the sea and its sources, the rivers, being continually renewed, as an alternative to the idea of an underground connection between sea and rivers; that salt water became sweet when evaporated; that the weight of salt water was greater than fresh; that near the shore the sea was less salt; that there was a very deep place in the middle of the Black Sea; and that the comparative freshness of the water of the Black Sea was due to its origin as a lake which had burst out at the Bosphorus. Many of these theories have been proved since, by scientific methods unavailable to the ancients.

mix' with the sea (*non intermisceat undam*, *Ecl.* 10.4-5).[32] Virgil also gives credence to one ancient theory that all the rivers, springs and the sea are connected under the earth when he writes about and names rivers under the earth (*G*. 4.366).

The poet focuses on the effects of rivers and the cold on the Black Sea and in so doing draws attention to the difference in climate between the place where he writes his letter and the place where he imagines Albinovanus will be reading it. The passage in *ex Ponto* 4.10 which deals with the reasons for the sea freezing, is striking because this is a subject both new and prosaic. The subject matter reinforces the epistolary style of this poem, because letters traditionally engage with the commonplace. However, as well as the intended recipient of the letter, the poet refers to an assumed wider audience. He undercuts the personal nature of this verse letter when he preempts a question 'if someone might ask why I have told you this' (*si roget haec aliquis cur sint narrata Pedoni, Pont*. 4.10.65) and instead of giving the sources of the new information he has just presented, the poet takes up again the theme with which he opened the poem, his ability to endure misfortune. He tells his reader that while writing he has 'beguiled time' (*tempusque fefelli, Pont*. 4.10.67) in order to forget his location, yet the subject of the poem is so place-specific that it is hard to credit this.

The opening of *ex Ponto* 4.10 emphasizes that the location of the letter-writer is of paramount importance. This poem opens with a variation of the formulaic address of a letter, giving the location rather than the name of the sender. In order to have the

[32] Virgil alludes to a nymph of the river Alpheus, the largest river of the Peloponnesus, whose waters were fabled to pass unmixed through the sea and to rise in the fountain of Arethusa at Syracuse.

magnitude of his displacement from Rome understood by his poet friend Albinovanus, the writer uses both a literary reference, 'on the Cimmerian shore' (*Cimmerio …/ litore, Pont* 4.10.1-2) and an ethnographical description of his position 'among the skin-clad Getae' (*pellitos … Getas, Pont* 4.10.2). The name of this remote tribe, the Getae, as well as being a place marker, is often used as a general ethnographic term to denote barbarity and foreignness. Although these people are known from the time of Herodotus to live on the Danube or Hister River, the first mention of the Getae in Ovid's exile poems comes in *Tristia* 2.191 where the race is linked with the river Danube and the extremes of the known world.[33] Herodotus stresses their unusual cultural practices rather than their geographical position and the Latin poets follow his lead and use the name to allude to wild and uncivilized peoples and places.[34] By describing the Getae as 'skin-clad' Ovid is placing them (and himself) at the outer edges of the world both in terms of civilized forms of dress and physical location. The name is used to denote the people and the geographical area but because the place is so far from Rome there is more embedded in the word. Reference to the Getae is always an allusion to the frightening and uncivilized wilderness, the unknown places where strange and dangerous people dwell.

[33] Herodotus writes that the Getae live on the Danube and he describes their religious beliefs, (4.91ff); that they are neighbours of the Scythians and the Danube (4.118); and that they believe themselves to be immortal, (5.3).The name *Getae,* along with the names of other tribes known to live in the general area, is often used in literature to denote both a geographical region and extreme contrast to Rome and the Roman way of life; *Tr.* 3.3.6; 3.10.5; 3.11.55; 4.1.67; 4.1.94; 5.12.10; *Pont.* 1.2.76; 2.10.50; 4.10.2. Virgil, (*G.* 4.463) writes of Orpheus in Thrace among the Getae. The name is used to indicate characteristics opposite to Roman, both in location and sophistication.

[34] Herodotus 4.95 describes the Getae as fierce fighters who were defeated by Darius the Persian King and writes with some skepticism about their rituals and their belief that they never die. The name *Getae* used to indicate personal characteristics opposite to the civilized Roman see; *Tr.* 3.14.42; 4.6.47; 5.1.46; 5.7.11; 5.10.38; *Pont.* 1.5.12; 1.5.66; 1.5.74; 1.8.6; 2.2.65; 3.2.37; 3.2.102; 3.5.28; 4.3.52; 4.8.84; 4.9.78; 4.13.22; 4.15.40; Virgil, *G.* 3.462; 4.463; Horace, *Carm,* 3.24.11; 4.15.22; Propertius, 4.3.9; 4.5.44.

As a locative marker the 'Cimmerian shore' in this poem is vague and much more literary than geographical.[35] It is unusual in that it is a reference to a place rather than to the Cimmerian peoples mentioned by Herodotus as a semi-mythical people, an ancient roving enemy responsible for the displacement of Scythians and Greeks in the remote northern areas of the world. Instead, the poet's use of the 'Cimmerian shore' positions the place (and himself) on the borders of Homer's fabulous world and brings to mind Homer's descriptions of the 'community and city of the Cimmerian people' which serve as a geographical marker for Odysseus as he seeks the entrance to the Underworld; near the 'deep-running Ocean' at the limit of the world; a cold sunless place of fog and darkness (*Od.* 11.14-19).[36] By naming the place in both literary and commonplace terms the poet consolidates the knowledge he shares with his readers. More importantly, this form of naming by the poet can be seen as self affirmation, as a means of gaining power and control by describing his new location in his own recognizable poetic language. Allusion to Homer, is a clear signal to Ovid's reader that the content of the poem is to be understood in terms of the tradition and heritage of literature.[37] References to Greek myths and stories in general and Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in particular are widespread in Latin literature as

[35] Homer's Cimmerians live near Ocean, the limit of the world; they live in perpetual cold and dark and their land is the last land Odysseus touches before descending into Hades, (*Od* 11.14-19). Herodotus does not specifically locate the Cimmerians but they enter his *Histories* as an enemy to both Greeks and the Scythians (1.6; 18; 103 and 4.1) and he writes, 'what is now Scythia is said to have once been inhabited by Cimmerians'. (Herodotus 4.11).

[36] Lattimore, R., (tr) *The Odyssey of Homer*, New York, 1991, p. 168. Reference to Homer's *Odyssey* and the hero Odysseus (Ulysses) by the Augustan elegists is common. See Davisson, M.H.T., '*Quid moror exemplis?*: Mythological *exempla* in Ovid's pre-exilic Poems and the Elegies from Exile', *Phoenix*, 47, 213-37, 1993.

[37] Reference to Homer carries with it the weight of literary authority and an acknowledgement of indebtedness to Greek culture and learning. The pinnacle of excellence is attributed to this author. Homer is cited as an authority by Thucydides at the beginning of his *The Peloponnesian War*. Warner, Rex, (tr) *Thucydides: The History of the Peloponnesian War*, Harmondsworth, 1972, p. 36. Strabo regards him as 'the founder of science and geography' and the authority for much of the content of his *Geography* (1.1.2; 1.1.10 and 1.1.11).

many ancient themes and ideas subsumed from them by Latin writers are re-presented in new and interesting ways.

Ovid re-presents Homer's 'long-suffering Odysseus' (in Greek the epithet is *polutlas*)[38] as Ulysses, an 'example' (*exemplum, Pont*. 4.10.9) of a 'heart suffering to excess' (*animi nimium patientis, Pont.* 4.10.9). With 'example' (*exemplum*) and 'Ulysses' (*Ulixes*) in the prominent positions of first and last word in the line the poet indicates a shift in perspective from the preceding illustration of his own endurance measured against inanimate objects to a more personal comparison. He draws a parallel between himself as a poet suffering in an unfamiliar place of exile and the hero Ulysses, enduring the hardships of wandering through unusual and dangerous places on his return from Troy. The exiled poet shows that his own greater suffering is brought about by the same causes, both natural and cultural, over which he, like Ulysses, has no control.[39] Reference to Ulysses, as well as echoing the distance separating the poet from home, serves to make Ovid's plight similarly famous and imbues his location with an importance not previously perceived by those in Rome.

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[38] In Homer's *Odyssey* the epithet *polutlas* is used of Odysseus 37 times. Throughout Ovid's exile poetry Ulysses is mainly named without an epithet; *Tr*. 3.11.61; *Pont.* 3.1.53; 3.6.19; 4.16.13; but, as well as having 'a heart suffering to excess' *Pont.* 4.10.9, we also find Ulysses described as, 'wary' (*cautum Tr*. 1.2.9) 'sturdy' (*durus Tr*. 5.5.51) and 'clever' (*solleret Pont*. 4.14.35). We find the name Ulysses used in many ways by many Latin poets, often in a re-telling of Homer's story: e.g.Virgil (*Aeneid*, Books 2 and 3 where Ulysses' heroism, trickery and courage give reflected glory to Aeneas); Horace evokes Ulysses as indicative of epic, *Carm*, 1.6.7; as an example of virtue and wisdom, *Ep*, 1.2.18; as a victim of his companions, *Ep* 1.6.63 and as patient Ulysses, *Ep* 1.7.40); Propertius sees Ulysses as a fortunate husband, 2.6.23, 2.9.7, 2.14.3; as persecuted by winds, 2.26.37; with his well-known wiles useless against the sea, 3.7.41; where his sufferings end in a homecoming to a faithful wife, 3.12.23ff; while [Tibullus] compares Messalla with the great Ulysses, both in courage to face dangers and in eloquence, 3.7.49ff.

[39] There is evidence in Ovid's exile poems to show that he believes that his suffering is a result of 'divine wrath', in his case the divinity in question is not one of the gods as pitted against Odysseus but a powerful force none-the-less – he writes of the Palatine and Caesar's house: 'It was from that citadel the thunderbolt fell on this head' (*venit in hoc illa fulmen ab arce caput, Tr*. 1.1.73). See also *Tr.* 1.5.77; 3.1.78; 4.10.129; and *Pont*. 1.1.63; 1.2.71; 2.8.2; 4.8.49, for conflation of Jove with Augustus and Ovid's misfortune. As a poet whose work is impervious to the wrath of Jove see Ovid's claim, *Met.* 15.871.

The world of Homer's *Odyssey* forms a basis or common ground against which the poet and his reader can measure this new location and experience. He describes his place of exile in relation to his own assessment of Ulysses' world view. In Homer's story, Odysseus sees the places and peoples with whom he comes in contact in terms of his civilized Ithacan homeland. Although Odysseus admits his home is rough, it is by this well known place, the civilized society and comfortable customs of Ithaka that he measures all others.[40] With this pervading comparison in mind Odysseus' journey can be read as an example of an ethnographic text within Homer's epic.[41] Ovid, by comparing his own experience with that of the Homeric hero, draws on both an ethnographic and a literary tradition to further emphasize his own dislocation from the civilization of Rome.

The poet selects some, but not all, of the places, events and peoples known to have been encountered by Ulysses: Calypso, Aeolus' winds, the Sirens, the Lotus, the Laestrygonians, Cyclops, Scylla and Charybdis. At first glance the poet seems to make light of the hero's sufferings.[42] He either dismisses them as unlikely to cause hardship (Calypso, Aeolus and

[40] 'I am at home in sunny Ithaka…… a rugged place but a good nurse of men; for my part I cannot think of a sweeter place on earth to look at. (*Od*. 9.21-28) Lattimore, R., (tr) 1991.

[41] Malkin, Irad, *The Retuns of Odysseus: Colonization and Ethnicity*, Berkley, 1998, p. xi, writes: 'how myths ... were used to mediate encounters and conceptualize ethnicity and group identity in the Archaic and Classical periods'. See also Dougherty, Carol, *The Raft of Odysseus: the Ethnographic Imagination of Homer's Odyssey*, Oxford, 2001. See also: Clarke, H.W., *The Art of the Odyssey*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1967.

[42] Ovid has listed the many woes of Ulysses earlier in his exile poems (*Tr*. 1.5.57-83) but it is a very general list. In *Tristia* 1.5.57-83, Ovid refers to Ulysses in a literary way as the Neritian hero and maintains that his own woes in exile exceed those of Ulysses. Ovid writes that he traveled a greater distance, he has no friends or companions, he is vanquished and an exile, that the loss of Rome is a greater loss than the loss of Ithaka, and that he is the weaker yet crushed by a greater god. Ovid emphasizes that Ulysses' labours are fiction (*ficta laborum*) while there is no myth (*fabula nulla*) in the poet's woes and that Ulysses did get home while he is stuck in exile. Propertius 3.12 writes of Ulysses to show how Postumius' wife is even more faithful than Penelope and that Postumius is a second Ulysses, whose long delays did him no harm. The 'delays' are slightly different to the list used by Ovid in *Pont*. 4.10, but many are common to both. Ovid, in his *Metamorphoses* has Achaemenides tell of Ulysses' encounter with the Cyclops, how he was left behind (*Met*. 14.180-188). Ovid has Macareus, another of Ulysses' companions, also relate his encounter with Aeolus, the Laesrtygonians, and Circe (*Met*. 14.223-310).

the Sirens and the Lotus) or, by direct comparison, indicates that they (the Laestrygonians, Cyclops, Scylla and Charybdis) are not as bad as the dangers he has to face, living so far from Rome, among such fierce barbarian tribes. However, by challenging the accepted reading of Ulysses' suffering in order to emphasize his own hardship, he also calls into question the credibility of his own writing. Incongruities and exaggerations in Ovid's version of Ulysses' sufferings make us aware of how easily the Homeric myths lend themselves to being re-presented. In poetry, reference to myth is generally made to a particular mythical event in order to highlight the significance of a comparable experience to the poet. Allusion, however, always leaves open the exact meaning to be drawn, as often the explicit reference has a range of underlying implicit meanings which can be either brought out or suppressed by the writer and either picked up or overlooked by the reader. Whitaker (1983) writes how the Augustan love-elegists made use of myth:

> Because the characters of myth were larger than life, greater than ordinary mortals, any comparison with them would automatically lend a depth and dignity to the poets' experience which it might not have otherwise appeared to possess.[43]

Ovid's re-evaluation of Ulysses' experiences is an example of multi-layered allusion at its best. The poet either questions how Ulysses' sufferings should be interpreted or compares them directly to his own experiences of the events and people in his place of exile. Comparisons between the full story in the *Odyssey* and the similarities posed by the poet in *ex Ponto* 4.10 come easily to mind.[44] The poet writes that not all the time Ulysses spent

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[43] Whitaker, R., *Myth and Personal Experience in Roman Love-Elegy*, Germany, 1983, p. 12, writes that 'The urgent need the Augustan love-elegists felt to generalize and dignify their experience is, I believe, the fundamental reason for their frequent recourse to myth'. He suggests that Ovid mainly uses myth for the purposes of wit, 'whereas Propertius and Tibullus employ myth subtly and allusively to illumine important aspects of their personal experience…' p. 15.

[44] For a detailed account of Odysseus' stay with Kalypso see: *Od*, 5.151-280. See also *Od*, 4.155; 5.15. See also Green, P., (tr) *Ovid: The Poems of Exile*, Harmondsworth, 1994, p.368 for other ancient writers' accounts of the number of years Odysseus stayed with Calypso.

wandering was bad, 'but yet not all these times were of troubled doom' (*tempora solliciti sed non tamen omnia fati, Pont*. 4.10.11). Homer makes it seven years that Odysseus stays with Calypso (*Od*. 7.259), while the Ovid tells us that Ulysses is only unhappy after six years in the bed of a goddess. The time six years (*sex annis, Pont.* 4.10.13) coincides with the poet's personal experience, his sixth summer spent (*bis tertia ducitur aestas, Pont* 4.10.1) in exile, to emphasize the similarity between himself and Homer's hero. The poet expresses doubt that either Ulysses or Calypso found it a hardship to be together for so long by stressing her beauty (*pulchram, Pont*. 4.10.13) and her status as goddess of the sea (*aequoreaque … deae, Pont.* 4.10.14). By using the accusative/infinitive construction in the hexameter 'and was it severe to have cherished the beautiful Calypso for six years' (*an graue sex annis pulchram fouisse Calypson, Pont.* 4.10.13) the poet makes the subject and object of the sentence obscure. The ambiguity is resolved in the pentameter,[45] where the object is clear and the subject for both lines is understood to be 'himself' meaning 'Ulysses'. With this grammatical construction the poet emphasizes that the action was reciprocal; that Ulysses and Calypso were together cherishing each other, while the poet has no such civilized and wifely comfort in exile.

The poet tells only part of the well-known story of Aeolus' winds to make light of Ulysses' suffering. While he stresses Ulysses' reception by the god of the winds, 'the son of Hippotades received him' (*excipit Hippotades, Pont*. 4.10.15) and the gift-giving that is an essential part of civilized Greek and Roman society, 'to whom he gave the winds as a gift' (*qui dat pro munere uentos, Pont*. 4.10.15), the reader cannot easily accept the beneficial

[45] In the pentameter: 'and to have shared the bed of the goddess of the sea' (*aequoreaeque fuit concubuisse deae? Pont.* 4.10.14) '*concubuisse*' takes the dative '*aequoreaeque …..deae*' and the subject '*se*' is understood.

nature of the gift 'so that a useful breeze should bend and drive his sail' (*curuet ut inpulsos utilis aura sinus, Pont.* 4.10.16) because the story is more often told, as it is in Homer's original narrative (*Od*. 10.1-75) to show that the winds, let loose by Odysseus' companions, blow them far away, just when they are within sight of their homeland. Allusion to Aeolus as 'Hippotades' by the poet alerts us to Homer's version of the story and is also self-referential, as this is not a common term for the god of the winds outside Ovid's own works.[46] Here, the encounter between Ulysses and Aeolus shows that the court of the god of the winds is similar in custom and civilization to Ulysses' home kingdom. The importance of guest-friendship and favourable winds for the safety of mariners is stressed so that the poet's plight, exiled over stormy seas (*Tr*. 1.2 and 1.4) to the home of the north wind (*Pont*. 4.10.41), assumes a greater significance. There are many references to the wind in the *Epistulae ex Ponto*;[47] in this poem the poet compares indirectly the 'useful breeze' (*utilis aura, Pont* 4.10.16) given to Ulysses with the personified north-wind, Boreas, who causes the poet's place of exile to be so very cold, 'from here Boreas is born and his home is on this shore' (*hinc oritur Boreas oraque domesticus huic est, Pont* 4.10.41). The poet exaggerates the geographical distance between the place where he lives and his former home in Rome by linking his place of exile with the birthplace of Boreas. The poem depends on a common knowledge of climatic zones having Rome at the temperate centre and the extremes of heat to the south, usually characterized by reference to Egypt, Ethiopia

[46] This name is found in Greek classical literature (see especially *Od*. 10.2 where Aeolus is introduced as Hippotes son) but is not common in Latin literature. Ovid explains this form of Aeolus' name (*Met*. 14.224) and uses *Hippotades* to refer to Aeolus in his *Metamorphoses*, 4.663; 11.413; 14.86 and 224; 15.707, and in his *Heroides*, 18.46.

[47] Vitruvius writes of the four winds in relation to building (*On Archictecture* 1.6.4-9); Strabo cites Homer as authority for the existence of only two winds (*Geography*, 1.2.21). Ovid usually refers to the winds in a literary manner; the north-wind is often personified and called Boreas, (*Met.* 1.65; 6.702; 12.24; 13.418; *Tr.* 3.10.11,14, & 45; *Pont.* 1.5.72; 4.12.35). Lucretius explains the causes of wind though he does not personify it (*De Rerum Natura*, 1.271).

or Libya, and the extremes of cold to the north signaled by reference to Pontus, the north wind and the Arctic or the Pole star.[48]

The allusion to the Sirens as 'maidens singing so well' (*bene cantantis … puellas, Pont*. 4.10.17) reminds the reader that no harm came to Odysseus or his crew, as he was tied up and his companions had their ears stopped with wax (*Od*. 12. 39-54; 157-200). However, by naming the Sirens in this indirect manner, the poet alludes to the power of their song, which could remind the reader that the poet is making use of that same power when he writes this letter to influence people in Rome.[49] The Lotus is also listed by the poet as harmless, but this is not the effect suggested by Homer who shows the land of the Lotus-eaters as new to Odysseus, a land which is to be investigated carefully to ascertain 'what men, what eaters of bread might live here in this country' (*Od*. 9.89).[50] The emphasis in Homer's *Odyssey* is on measuring the new land and peoples against Odysseus' known customs and kingdom. The danger comes from the sweet Lotus which makes Odysseus' companions forget their own homeland, a dreadful thing to befall a home-loving Greek. Because Ovid's allusion to Lotus and forgetting follows so closely his reference to song, it is the poet's fear of being forgotten rather than the wish to forget his homeland that is

[48] Vitruvius' work is possibly based on an earlier Greek ethnographic description of climatic zones and the influence of these zones on racial characteristics (see Jones, W.H.S. (tr) *Hippocrates: Airs, Waters, Places*, Cambridge Mass., 1972). Vitruvius refers to the well known climatic zones and juxtaposes Pontus with Rome (*On Archictecture* 6.1.1).

[49] Ovid has written previously of the power of his verse, not only to ensure his lasting fame (*Am*. 3.15.20; *Met*. 15.876; *Tr*. 3.7.50-52; *Pont*. 4.16.45-6) but to increase the fame of the people he writes into his 'books' (his mistress, *Am*. 3.12.7-10; his friend Graecinus *Pont*. 2.6.33-4; Cotta Maximus *Pont*. 3.2.35-6; Suillius *Pont*. 4.8.46-7; Tuticanus *Pont*. 4.12.1-4; his wife *Pont*. 3.1.57). Ovid has also written at length on the power of his poetry to cause him harm, referring especially to his 'Art' (*Tr*. 1.9.58; 2.207; 3.7.9; 3.14.6; 4.1.36; 5.7.31-6; 5.12.48 and *Pont.* 1.5.28; 2.7.48; 2.10.15-16; 4.13.41; 4.14.15-18.)

[50] This ethnographic approach (a concern with races of people and their customs) to new lands and peoples becomes formulaic in Homer's *Odyssey*, see also 10.101; and a variation at 9.174-6. The words, 'eaters of bread' differentiates between those peoples who have agriculture and a civilized way of life and those who kill and eat animals and men. See Malkin, Irad, *The Retuns of Odysseus*, 1998 and Dougherty, Carol, *The Raft of Odysseus*, 2001 for ethnography in the *Odyssey*.

understood.[51] He shifts the emphasis and elaborates the allusion to indicate that forgetfulness would be beneficial in his own situation. To purchase forgetfulness 'with part of my life' (*parte meae uitae, Pont*. 4.10.20) seems like an exaggerated claim for the poet to make and it may be just a figure of speech, but the words call to mind his previous claims that his poetry, 'yet my better part' (*parte tamen meliore mei, Met*. 15.875) will cause him to be remembered for all time. The idea of forgetting is picked up again by the poet later in this poem when he tells how he forgets his worries, as he writes to stop himself thinking about his present location, 'nor do we feel ourselves to be in the middle of the Getae' (*in mediis nec nos sensimus esse Getis, Pont*. 4.10.70).[52] Memory and forgetting assume a greater importance when the poet is exiled, when he no longer has the affirmation of face to face encounters with his group of poet friends or his customary audience.

The poet shifts the emphasis away from the not-so-hard hardships of Ulysses and directs it toward his own situation in exile and so leads neatly to the second category of dangers which are used for comparison. Although the dangers of the Laestrygonians, Cyclops, Scylla and Charybdis are well known from Homer's *Odyssey*, in this poem they are used as a standard by which to measure the threat felt by the poet from the barbarian people where he lives. The Laestrygonians and Cyclops are symbols of uncivilized peoples, not 'eaters of bread' but eaters of people. They both break the taboos of civilized peoples in that they

[51] The term Lotus, is used here by Ovid to mean, 'A fabulous plant bringing forgetfulness on those who eat of its fruit' (*OLD*, 1). See also *Tr*. 4.1.31 where the poet stresses that the pleasure of eating sweet lotus brings harm like the pleasure of writing verse has harmed him. In other works (*Her*. 15.159, *Met.*9.341, 10.96; and Virgil's *G*. 3.394) the term is used to describe a plant (*OLD*, 3, 4) and (*Fast*. 4.190) a 'musical pipe made from wood' (*OLD*, 2b).

[52] Lotus is not the only means of forgetting: Ovid refers more often to the waters of Lethe as the agent of oblivion and sleep. See also: *Met*. 11.603; *Tr*. 4.1.47-8 and *Pont*. 2.4.23; 4.1.17.

eat strangers rather than giving them aid.[53] Scylla and Charybdis are examples of the monstrous; Scylla defies both natural and human laws in form and appetite, and Charybdis distorts the natural movement of the sea to become an unnatural threat to sailors. These names, synonymous with the dreadful death and destruction of Odysseus' companions in Homer's epic, here are juxtaposed with names largely unknown in Latin literature: Piacches, the Heniochi and the Achaei.[54] With such little corroborative evidence for the nature of these peoples the poet establishes them as 'savage' (*saeuum … Piacchen, Pont.* 4.10.23) and 'hostile' (*infestis … Achaeis, Pont.* 4.10.27). These unusual names are a foretaste of the later content of the poem where the poet makes a great list of the names of rivers, names which, for the most part are also unfamiliar in Rome.

The comparison between the poet and Ulysses not only calls into question the veracity of the claims, but also reminds the reader of the parts of the story left untold. The claim that 'not all the times were of troubled doom' would sooner evoke the pleasant time Homer's Odysseus spent in the civilized land of the Phaiakians. This land of the Phaiakians, though foreign, has a civilization similar to Ithaka, with the same social structure and customs, where telling stories is part of a common culture. The well-read reader would also

[53] Both the Laestrygonians and Cyclops are depicted as human, dangerous because they do not follow a civilized code of conduct regarding guests. In an earlier poem *ex Ponto* 2.9 to a neighbouring king, Ovid appeals for aid and, when he cites the Laestrygonian king as universally cursed, it is understood to be because of uncivilized behaviour towards Ulysses. Ovid in his *Metamorphoses* has one of Ulysses companions, Macarus, survive to tell how another 'stained with his blood the Laestrygonians' impious mouths' (*Laestrygonis impia tinxit / ora cruor suo… Met.* 14.236-7) and has another companion, Achaemenides, survive to tell of his encounter with Cyclops, describing 'his cruel hands and the empty circle of his eye, his limbs and beard stiff with human blood' (*crudelsque manus et inanem luminis orbem / membraque et humano concretam sanguine barbam. Met.* 14.200-201). Descriptions like this stress the horror of the contrast between cannibalism or the eating of fellow humans and the expected host/guest welcome.

[54] Piacches is only found here; the Heniochi and Achaei only here; Strabo, *Geography,* 2.5.31, 11.2.12, 17.3.24 and Velleius Paterculus, *History of Rome,* 2.40.1. Although Ovid shows them here as fierce and posing a threat to mariners and the shore on which he lives, both Strabo and Velleius Paterculus discuss them generally as tribes in the region of the Black Sea.

remember the eloquent tongue of Odysseus and the numerous occasions where his 'stories' were really fabrications of a dubious nature.[55] On reading Ovid's comparison with Ulysses (*Pont*. 4.10.9-30) coupled with the poet's usual plea for credence (*Pont*. 4.10.35-6) the reader could be forgiven for asking if the extreme dangers and the unique conditions faced by the exiled poet are also exaggerated to make a good story? The reader may remember the poet's descriptions of his place of exile in *Tristia* where the civilization of the area is brought out: 'here also then, there are Greek cities, who would believe it?' (*hic quoque sunt igitur Graiae – quis crederet? – urbes, Tr*. 3.9.1).[56] However, throughout the poems in *Epistulae Ex Ponto*, the overriding emphasis is on the dangers of the place, the lack of civilization and its harsh climate. Throughout the exile letters the poet stresses the great distance between himself in exile and his friends in Rome, a distance so great that he may as well be dead and have crossed the river Styx in the underworld. He writes that 'the land of Pontus is not far distant from the Styx' (*a Styge nec longe Pontica distat humus, Pont*. 3.5.56), he wishes that he could 'set forth from Stygian waters' (*exeat e Stygiis ut mea nauis aquis, Pont*. 4.9.74) and that the underworld would be preferable to his place of exile 'The Styx too, if the world has anything even lower than the Styx, if anything is, will be a better change from the Hister' (*Styx quoque, si quid est, bene commutabitur Histro / si quid et inferius quam Styga mundus habet, Pont*. 4.14.11-12). In *ex Ponto* 4.10 the poet is concerned with the effect of the cold and dangers of exile and how, because of these

[55] Odysseus is known for distorting the facts about his name and ancestry, (*Od*. 9.366, 13.254-286, 14.192-359, 19.172-204 etc.) See also Ovid's *Her*. 3.129, *A.A.* 2.123.

[56] The poet has written about the 'mixture of Greeks and Getae' (*mixta … Graecosque Getasque, Tr*. 5.7.11) and in his place of exile 'a few retain traces of the Greek tongue' (*in paucis extant Graecae vestige linguae, Tr*. 5.7.51) He also writes of the people; 'even these, who are believed to be born from the Greek city' (*hos quoque, qui geniti Graia creduntur ab urbe, Tr*. 5.10.33), and the place; 'the Milesian city' (*Miletida…urbem, Tr* 1.10.41) referring to the colony of the Greek city Miletus. See above p. 14, note 8.

discomforts, he values both the friendship of the recipient of his letter and his own ability to continue to write poetry even while exiled so far from Rome.

This ability is demonstrated in the content and the clear three-part structure of the poem. The first section (*Pont.* 4.10.1-30) begins with a formulaic letter opening which is varied to include the location of the writer and the name of the addressee (Albinovanus) and a request to compare the endurance of the poet with three inanimate objects. In this choice of objects the poet calls on representatives of the natural world (a rock) and the tamed or civilized world (a ring, an iron plough), which leads on to the same categories, natural and cultural, in the points of comparison between the poet and Ulysses and the usual tricolon of dangers faced by the poet, no trees, the dangerous weapons of the enemy and the cold. Mention of the cold opens the way for an explanation of the phenomenon of the sea freezing in winter which makes up the second section (*Pont*. 4.10.31-64) and includes an epic touch in its catalogue of rivers. The third section (*Pont*. 4.10.65-84) picks up on the idea of epic by reference to the poem which the recipient of the letter is writing about the epic hero, Theseus. In this section the emphasis is on friendship, loyalty, love and a common interest in poetry.

Immediately following the explanation of the sea freezing the poet refers both to the addressee of this letter and to his wider audience, those friends of the poet in Roman society who, he imagines, may ask why he writes. This accentuates the distance between the poet and what he considers to be the centre of the world, that group of poets who comprise his audience in Rome. Distance is an essential aspect of the letter form as is the

subjective information and advice it carries over the miles. By re-introducing the recipient of the letter, Albinovanus Pedo, in the last section of the poem the poet stresses the bonds and duty of friendship through reference to the poem Pedo is writing about Theseus.[57]

We know very little about Albinovanus Pedo's writing except for a fragment quoted by Seneca the Elder as an example of the best description of the limits of the Ocean, but his reputation as a poet, wit and storyteller is evident from the words of contemporaries such as Ovid, and the two Senecas.[58] The fragment preserved by the Elder Seneca is introduced as a description of Ocean by 'Pedo who speaks of Germanicus at Sea' (*Pedo qui <in> navigante Germanico dicit, Suas*. 1.15) and this shows that both Ovid and Pedo had distant places and struggles against hardship as common themes in their writing. Ovid's *ex Ponto* 4.10 is the only extant evidence for a poem written about Theseus by Pedo so all that we can know of its content is through the remarks Ovid makes about it (*Pont* 4.10.71-84)

[57] Albinovanus, a poet and friend of Ovid is addressed twice in this poem, by *nomen* here at *ex Ponto* 4.10.4 and by *cognomen* 'Pedo' at *Pont.* 4.10.63 and he is also named as one of the poets with whom Ovid shares fame in a later poem *Pont.* 4.16.6. His significance as recipient of this letter lies in the strength of an appeal from one poet to another, especially as Ovid is at pains to make allusion to epic heroes; comparing himself to Ulysses and referring to a poem about Theseus written by his friend Albinovanus as an example of the binding nature of friendship. Syme, R., *History in Ovid*, Oxford, 1978, pp. 88-9 points out that although Pedo is no stranger to military campaigns in distant locations, he would have no special understanding or knowledge of the rivers listed by Ovid in this poem, *Pont.* 4.10.45ff., because he was on the Rhine at a later time (the year 15, attested by Tacitus, *Ann*. 1.60.2) than the date (the year 14, as the sixth summer from his exile in the year 8) set for *Pont.* 4.10.

[58] See, Winterbottom M., (tr) *The Elder Seneca. Controversae VII-X, Suasoriae*. Cambridge, Mass., 1974, pp. 503-505 for the fragment of Pedo's poem. Ovid describes Albinovanus Pedo as 'dear' (*carissime* Pont. 4.10.3) and as 'starry' (*sidereusque Pedo Pont*. 4.16.6). The latter word has been interpreted as meaning 'towering above the stars' by Wheeler A. L, (tr) and G.P. Gould, (ed) *Ovid. Tristia, Ex Ponto*, Cambridge, Mass., 1996 and 'heavenly' by Courtney, E., ed., *The Fragmentary Latin Poets*, Oxford, 1993, p. 315. The Elder Seneca, when writing of Ovid's powers of declamation lists Albinovanus Pedo as being among those poets who judged the worst lines of Ovid's poetry, the same lines that Ovid felt must remain unchanged in spite of their faults. Seneca *Contr* 2.2.12, Winterbottom M., (tr) *The Elder Seneca. Controversae I-VI*. Cambridge, Mass., 1974. The younger Seneca wrote: 'I heard Albinovanus Pedo, that most attractive storyteller speaking…' (*Pedonem Albinovanum narrantem audieramus, erat autem fabulator elegantissimus… Ep*. CXXII). Gummere, R.M., (tr) *Seneca Epistulae Morales. Books XCIII – CXXIV*, Cambridge, Mass., 1925. Courtney, E., *The Fragmentary Latin Poets*, 1993, pp. 315-6, writes that Albinovanus Pedo 'exercised his wit in the writing of epigrams (often referred to by Martial with those of Catullus and Domitius Marsus as being a precedent for his own)' and that he 'is usually identified with the *praefectus* Pedo serving under Germanicus in Germany in AD 15 (Tac. *Ann*. 1.60.2)'.

where the poet admonishes his friend to be like his hero Theseus in loyalty.[59] However lines (71-84) are not straightforward as each idea is presented as its negative or with an overriding disclaimer. Ovid's reference to Theseus, with the words 'he forbids, surely, loyalty to be a companion only in tranquil times' (*uetat ille profecto / tranquilli comitem temporis esse fidem, Pont*. 4.10.78) is an example of this complicated or inverted meaning.[60] It is an oblique way of referring to the well known but far from tranquil time when Theseus' loyalty was tested as he braved the underworld with his friend Pirithous. Although Pirithous' name is not mentioned in this poem, only that of Theseus, the companionship between them is established by the use of the word 'loyalty' (*fides*) to reinforce the friendship and loyalty between Ovid and his far-off friend Albinovanus Pedo. Reference to Theseus as a hero through his great deeds, followed by the comment that Pedo himself does not have to overcome the same monstrous enemies that Theseus faced, suggests, in a convoluted way, the dangers that Ovid has described earlier in the poem. Pedo, 'or anyone at all' (*quilibet Pont*. 4.10.78) can be a Theseus, which reminds the reader that Ovid has described himself as being not merely like but greater than Ulysses, suffering greater dangers and enduring so much more discomfort. The friendship and loyalty of Pirithous and Theseus is proverbial.[61] In many poems the poet has emphasized the quality and duty of friendship by quoting the example of the mythological Theseus and

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[59] Ovid uses the term for loyalty or fidelity three times in eight lines: *fidem, Pont*. 4.10.74; *fide, Pont*. 4.10.78; *fidem, Pont*. 4.10.82.

[60] For inverted or negative meanings which all call into question the ideas or sentiments expressed, see also: 'no need for you to overcome enemies' (*non tibi sunt hostes … domandi Pont*. 4.10.79); 'love…a thing not hard for the willing' (*…amor, res non operose uolenti, Pont*. 4.10.81); the question 'what hard work is it not to disgrace pure loyalty?' (*quis labor est puram non temerasse fidem? Pont*. 4.10.82); the admonition 'you must not think…' (*non.…putes, Pont*. 4.10.84) and the disclaimers, 'I doubt not' (*non dubit,o Pont*. 4.10.71); 'surely' (*profecto, Pont* 4.10.73); ' … as one ought' (*debuit, Pont*. 4.10.76).

[61] Ovid makes reference to this pair of friends along with other well known loyal friends throughout his work. See *Tr*. 1.5.19-20; 1.9.31-2; *Pont*. 2.3.43-4; 2.6.26; 3.2.33-4. See also Theseus and Pirithous having an 'auspicious friendship' (*felix concordia, Met*. 8.303).

Pirithous. He has described them on the hunt for the Calydonian Boar and has put in Theseus' mouth words spoken to Pirithous: 'Stay away, Oh dearer to me than my own self, part of my soul' (*o me mihi carior inquit / pars animae constiste meae*, *Met*. 8.405-6)[62] to show the strength of feeling between friends.

From the complexity of allusion to myth by the poet at the beginning and end of this poem it is easy to see, with Davisson (1982) that this poem is 'not simply a versified letter intended to communicate certain facts about his existence to a particular addressee'.[63] However, the 'facts' such as the names of rivers, the explanation of the dilution of the sea and the intense cold causing the sea to freeze, are included in Ovid's poems because the poet is now living in exile at the edge of the known world and has first hand experience of this foreign place. The poet's comparison between himself and the mythological hero Ulysses brings out the ethnocentric point of view of the poet and shows how he uses traditional stories in this ethnographic poem to make his place and state of exile comprehensible to his urban audience.

Ovid also shows his ethnocentric viewpoint in *ex Ponto* 4.2 sent to Severus, his good friend and fellow poet in Rome, so that his friend may readily understand and sympathize with his situation in exile. The poet maintains that his place of exile is responsible for a decline in his poetic style and a changed attitude to writing. From this the reader is to

[62] In his poem to Severus he uses a similar expression to show deep feelings of friendship when he writes: 'Accept the greeting that your beloved Naso might send to you, Severus, a greater part of my heart' (*A tibi dilecto missam Nasone salutem /accipe, pars animae magna, Seuere, meae, Pont.* 1.8.1-2). See p. 38 above.

[63] Davisson, M.H.T., '*Duritia* and Creativity in Exile: *Epistulae ex Ponto* 4.10', *Classical Antiquity*, 1.1, 28-42, 1982, p. 41, writes: 'It is the poet's stubborn insistence on manipulating his addressee, the audience as a whole, poetic tradition, and facts about his environment that constitutes his *duritas*'. I cannot agree with this assessment as I think 'manipulation' is too strong a word to apply to an exiled poet, who, to my way of reading, is responding to the distance of exile in the only way he can.

understand that Ovid sees himself now as different, as an 'outsider', in relation to both his Roman friends and to the Getae with whom he lives. He is no longer part of the group of poets meeting, talking and discussing their work in Rome nor is he part of the community of Tomis because he retains his ethnocentric Roman point of view and sees the local people as inferior. This is evident in his choice of derogatory adjectives. Here they are 'unshorn' (*intonsis, Pont.* 4.2.2.) but in other poems the people with whom he lives are referred to as: 'war-loving' (*Marticolis, Tr*.5.3.22, *Pont*. 4.14.14), 'a trousered mob of Getans' (*bracataque turba Getae, Tr*.4.6.47), 'savage or uncultured' (*inhumanos, Pont.* 1.5.66; 3.5.28; 4.13.22), 'hard or stern' (*duros, Pont.* 1.5.12; 3.2.102), 'filthy' (*squalidus, Pont* 1.2.106), 'quiver-bearing' (*pharetrato, Pont.*1.8.6), 'savage' (*saeuos, Pont.* 4.8.84), 'skin-clad' (*pellitos, Pont.* 4.10.2), 'wild' (*feros, Pont.* 4.15.40) and as 'the scarce-pacified Getans' (*male pacatis … Getis, Pont.* 2.7.2). In the poem, *ex Ponto* 2.7 Ovid gives his strongest disparaging opinion of the people with whom he lives: 'no race in the whole world is grimmer than the Getae' (*nulla Getis toto gens est truculentior orbe, Pont*. 2.7.31). All these descriptive terms denigrate the people and their customs.[64] The term 'unshorn' (*intonsis, Pont.* 4.2.2) has a pejorative tone and highlights the difference between the Getae and the Romans who take pride in well-barbered hair as a mark of civilization.[65] This emphasis on difference is reinforced when he describes the only people to whom he can read his poems as the 'yellow Coralli' (*flauis Corallis, Pont*. 4.2.16). The

[64] The Getae are usually described in less than flattering terms but sometimes an adjective such as 'stern' (*rigidos, Tr*. 5.1.46) or 'hard' (*durus, Pont* 1.5.2; 3.2.102) can have a positive connotation referring to the harsh primitivism often suggested as an alternative to the soft, degenerative way of life of the contemporary Roman (see Horace, *Carm.* 3.24.9-13) and Virgil writes with approbation of the 'hardy rustics' weapons' (*duris agrestibus arma, G*. 1.160). As shown, above, page 12, note 2, the term 'war-loving' (*Marticolis Tr*.5.3.22, *Pont*. 4.14.14) has an inbuilt ambiguity.

[65] Ovid has used a similar tone when pointing out in his *Ars Amatoria* how a man should be groomed, 'nor let a bad hand disfigure by shearing your stiff locks, hair and beard should be well cut' (*nec male deformet rigidos tonsura capillos / sit coma, sit trita barba resecta manu, A.A.* 1.517-8).

adjective most likely refers to the hair colour of these peoples, a colour dissimilar to the dark hair common among Romans.[66] Although the adjective is most often found in literature associated with heroes and heroines; Jason (*Ep.*12.11); Lucretia (*Fast* 2.763); Ariadne (Catullus 64.63); Ganymede (*Carm* 4.4.4); and the goddess Minerva (*Fast.* 6.652), this cannot be the tone of the word when applied to a barbarian tribe. The poet's unflattering view of the people is an indication of the low esteem in which he holds the place where he lives.

Throughout this poem, the poet maintains that his poetic genius has declined and blames the change on his place of exile. Drawing a direct comparison between himself and the greatest poet, Homer, he writes that 'if anyone had placed Homer himself in this land, believe me he too would become a Getan' (s*i quis in hac ipsum terra posuisset Homerum / esset, crede mihi, factus et ille Getes Pont*. 4.2.21-2).[67] This couplet shows the poet's belief that the place itself has a profound effect on its inhabitants, whether they are born there or unwillingly relegated to that location. Here again, the tone indicates that to be a Getan is to be inferior to a Greek or Roman, especially a Greek or Roman poet. There is no way of knowing the depth and extent of the Getan culture (if it had a literary culture no written text has survived) but from an ethnocentric Roman point of view it was considered non-

[66] Ovid's exile poems are the first extant example of the name 'Coralli' and little is known of the tribe. They are described as 'yellow' (*flauis, Pont.* 4.2.37) or 'skin-clad' (*pellitis, Pont.* 4.8.83) like the Getae. Mostly associated with the Germans, yellow hair is obtained from them to make wigs for Roman matrons (see Ovid, *Amores* 1.14.45) as yellow is desired as a hair colour in Rome (*Amores* 2.4.43). Yellow hair is a mark of northern barbarians. (Pliny 2.189) Rackham, H., (tr) *Pliny, Natural History, Books I-II*, Cambridge, Mass., 1979. Pliny associates climate with racial characteristics, privileging the centre (Rome) over the extremes, and following the same ethnocentric patterns found in earlier writers such as Vitruvius (see note 48 above)

[67] Ovid has compared himself with Homer before: 'Give the Maeonian so many dangers as are about me and all his genius will fall before such great misfortunes' (*da mihi Maeoniden et tot circumice casus / ingenium tantis excidet omne malis. Tr*. 1.1.47-8).

existent.[68] From Ovid's perspective, the place is barely civilized, with no trees or agriculture and peopled with dangerous, warlike and primitive tribes. It offers nothing comparable to the civilized culture from which he is banished and allows no nurture of such cultured pursuits as poetic composition and appreciation.

It seems fitting for the poet to write about poets and poetry to his friend Severus because that seems to be what they have in common. From the little we know of him, Cornelius Severus was a writer of two epic poems: one about the kings of Rome and the other about the war in Sicily and he was one of the poets in the group of Ovid's close literary friends.[69] We know of the importance of group discussion among literary friends from the work of Seneca the Elder, a near contemporary of Ovid, who is, in the words of Winterbottom 'our richest source of information on the rhetorical practices of the early Roman empire'.[70] It is through his writing that we get a picture of the group dynamic that ranged from display speaking in public or before great men to recitations behind the closed doors of important literary personages. Seneca praises Severus' poem on the death of Cicero in the context of group discussion and criticisms. He mentions Severus as present at a recitation in the house of Messala Corvinus, Ovid's patron, and describes the ensuing applause and lively

[68] There is no archeological evidence to suggest that a strong literary culture flourished in the vicinity of Tomis but fine pottery figurines show an artistic aesthetic. See MacKendrick, P., *The Dacian Stones Speak*, Chapel Hill, 1975, p. 5-6, Gimbutas, Marija, *The Language of the Goddess*, London, 1989, p. 183 and Miller, P.A., *Subjecting Verses. Latin Love Elegy and the Emergence of the Real*, Princeton and Oxford, 2004, p. 212. Ovid, himself, in a poem to a neighbouring king, acknowledges that King Cotys of Thrace has been trained in 'the liberal arts' (*ingenuas … artes Pont* 2.9.47) and appeals to him as a fellow poet.

[69] Syme, R., *History in Ovid*, Oxford, 1978, pp. 80-1, writes that Severus in this letter, *Pont.* 4.2, is 'Patently the epic poet Cornelius Severus…' (as distinct from the Severus addressed at *Pont.* 1.8, where the content of the letter shows one who has no interest in poetry). See also Courtney, E., ed., *The Fragmentary Latin Poets*, Oxford, 1993, p. 320, for the fragment of verse attributed to Severus.

[70] Winterbottom M., (tr) *The Elder Seneca, Controversae I-VI*, 1974, Introduction, p. x.

discussion.[71] Courtney (1993) writes of the friendship between Ovid and Severus and points out that, in this fragment of Severus' poem on Cicero 'Cornelius appears to imitate and therefore postdate, *Ex Ponto* 1-3 (AD.. 13)'.[72] Imitation or a certain similarity of style is evident between the verse of Severus and Ovid's verse letters from exile.[73] This may have been the result of shared readings, comments and criticisms experienced within that earlier group.

In exile the poet has no audience, no-one to hear him recite his verse except the barbarian tribes in the vicinity.[74] He writes 'but what shall I do alone?' (*sed quid solus agam, Pont*. 4.2.39) and reveals his Roman prejudice as he considers himself to be alone among the Getic people. From the poet's viewpoint, these people are no substitute for the people he knew previously. This lack of literary equals, of 'comrades' (*sodales, Tr*. 1.3.65, 1.7.10, 4.5.1 and *Pont*. 1.8.25) is especially difficult for a poet used to recitation, discussion and criticism within a group of poets, often under the patronage of one learned and wealthy man. The poet himself has written about the importance of literary discussion in other

[71] Seneca *Suas*. 6.26-27, Winterbottom M., (tr) *The Elder Seneca. Controversae VII-X, Suasoriae*. Cambridge, Mass., 1974See *Pont*. 1.7 27-42 for Ovid's acknowledgement of Messala Corvinus and his household especially his son Messalinus to whom the letter is written (also *Pont*. 2.2) and with allusion to Messalinus' brother Cotta Maximus. Many letters are addressed to Messalinus and Cotta Maximus, *Pont*. 1.5, 1.9, 2.3, 2.8, 3.2, and 3.5. See also *Pont*. 2.7 to Atticus on the subject of shared poetry, criticism and encouragement.

[72] Courtney, E., ed., *The Fragmentary Latin Poets*, 1993, p. 320.

[73] A line of speech, which is attributed to Severus by Seneca 'the eloquence of the Latin tongue grew dumb with sadness' (*conticuit Latiae tristis facundia linguae Suas*. 6.27) shows links between Ovid and Severus. Ovid writes about Cotta Maximus' father, Messala and his 'eloquent tongue' (*Latiae facundia linguae Pont*. 2.3.75 and describes Fabius Maximus as 'Maximus, eloquence of the Roman tongue' (… *Romanae facundia, Maxime, linguae Pont*. 1.2.67).

[74] When the poet writes: 'Here, to whom could I recite my writing except to the yellow-haired Coralli or else to the other tribes the barbarous Hister has?' (*Hic mea cui recitem nisi flauis scripta Corallis / quasque alias gentes barbarus Hister habet? Pont.* 4.2.36-7) he makes the adjective, '*barbarus*' agree with the river '*Hister*' rather than the tribe, '*gentes*' as you would expect, further emphasizing how the place affects people.

verse letters to his friend Macer and to Atticus.[75] In one poem to Cotta Maximus (*ex Ponto* 3.5) Ovid explains how he must send his greetings from exile and he stresses his dissatisfaction with letters as a means of communication by pointing out, in two elaborate comparisons, that it is best to hear words as they are spoken. He writes that face to face conversation is better than words conveyed by means of a letter in the same way that drinking water from a spring is better than drinking carried water, or that fruit plucked off the branch is better than that taken from an engraved platter (*Pont*. 3.5.15-20). These comparisons emphasize how the poet lacks the intensity of face to face contact and support in exile, support that he suggests is crucial to his poetry.

The poet's early confidence in himself and his poetry, sustained by his solid circle of friends and patrons in Rome, appears much less in his later poems. In his letters from exile he writes that his talent is less than it used to be and he invariably attributes this poetic decline to the harsh climate, the dangers and the unresponsive people in his place of exile. The Getae are no substitute for his like-minded intellectual friends in Rome and his poetry has now to be sent over vast distances to be read. Without the stimulus of the personal interaction which he enjoyed in Rome the poet maintains that his talent has dried up in this distant place of exile. The poet employs a common figurative example of 'ploughing the sand' (*litus arare*)[76] to show that he feels he is labouring in vain when he writes 'yet my talent yields not as before but I plough a dry shore with a barren plough-share' (*nec tamen*

[75] *Pont*. 2.10. See also Hardie, Philip, *Ovid's Poetics of Illusion*, Cambridge, 2002 and Williams, G.D., 'Conversing After Sunset: A Callimachean echo in Ovid's Exile Poetry', *Classical Quarterly*, 41: I, 169-171, 1991 on this poem. See *Pont*. 2.7, to Atticus.

[76] In his earlier poetry Ovid has used this image (or a variation) to signify labour in vain: *Tr*. 5.4.48, *Heroides*, 5.115-116 and 17.139. Green, P., *Ovid: The Poems of Exile*, Harmondsworth, 1994(a) p. 352, points out the connection in this poem with this story of Odysseus/Ulysses and cites 'Apollod *Epit* 3.6-7 with Frazer's note *ad loc*' and asks: 'Is this a sly way of confessing that Ovid's claims of poetic exhaustion are also feigned?'

ingenium nobis respondet ut ante / sed siccum sterili uomere litus aro Pont. 4.2.15-16).[77] This figure of speech, coupled with the name of Homer a few lines below brings to mind Homer's hero, Odysseus, and the familiar story of his feigned madness and delaying tactics when asked to assist Menelaus and Agamemnon in the war against Troy.[78] In complex examples of self-recommendation, Ovid, in his early works as well as his exile poetry, compares himself as a poet to the greatest poet, Homer as well as to Homer's hero Odysseus (Ulysses).[79] The reference to Homer's hero in *ex* Ponto 4.2, embedded as it is in agricultural imagery, suggests that Ovid sees that his poetry in exile is a similar example of futile effort.

Although it is difficult to see what connection agriculture has with the recipient of this letter, the link between agriculture and civilization (inherent in the word *cultus*)[80] is implied by reference to such civilized pursuits as poetry writing. Perhaps the agricultural imagery flows from the poet's choice of examples of additions to sufficiency which he uses to excuse his reluctance to send poetry to a poet like Severus 'Oh! Best poet of greatest kings' (*o, uates magnorum maxime regum, Pont*. 4.2.1).[81] The proverbial examples: honey, Falernian wine, grain and fruit (*mel, Falerna uina, fruges* and *poma, Pont*. 4.2.9-10), are juxtaposed with the divinities, or those favoured by them, associated

[77] In keeping with the agricultural imagery of the previous lines, see OLD *respondeo*, 8c, of crops – to give return, to yield.
[78] Referring to Ulysses, Ovid writes: 'I have borne more than the Neritian hero' (*Nerito nam mala plura tuli, Tr*. 1.5.58) and 'truly, Ulysses was fortunate compared with me' (*crede mihi, felix nobis collatus ulyxes, Tr*. 3.11.61) as well as the most complete parallel between Ovid and Ulysses found in *ex Ponto* 4.10.
[79] Because Ovid gives poems to his girl, she should consider him to be 'greater than great Homer' (*magno sit maior Homero, Amores* 1.8.61). In his *Art of Love*, Ovid is scathing about the need for presents and writes that if Homer came empty handed except for poems, he would be shown the door! (*A.A.* 2.279-280). In the exile poems Ovid uses Homer as a measure of the greatness of his fellow poet Macer (*Pont*. 2.10.13).
[80] OLD *cultus, ppp* of *colo* and *cultus*
[81] See note 69, above for Courtney, E., 1993, p. 320, on Severus' poetry about kings. I see that Ovid's esteem for Severus is exaggerated through the use of the words 'best' and 'greatest' is such close proximity.

with the origins and profusion of agriculture.[82] The imagery both honours the rural home of the Muses, Mt. Helicon (*Helicona, Pont* 4.2.11) and sets up an image of satisfying abundance which adds pathos to the poet's description of his place of exile and the 'cold solace' (*solacia frigida, Pont.* 4.2.45) of 'the goddesses who', he writes, 'have not served me well' (*non bene de nobis quae meruere deae, Pont.* 4.2.46). The agricultural imagery is striking and emphasizes the difference between the poet and his friend: the poet, Ovid, who writes verse letters in a place of exile where there is an absence of both poets and agriculture and his friend Severus writing epic poetry in a civilized place among other poets and with all the comforts of good food and wine.

The use of agricultural terms, more common in prose writing, also adds a conversational tone and reinforces the letter form of this verse. This is augmented by the allusion to the many 'letters, bereft of meter' (*orba … numeris … epistula, Pont.* 4.2.5) that have passed between these two friends. It serves to underline the point that poetry in this place of exile is not the same as it was for the poet in Rome, in order to evoke sympathy for his plight in exile in the mind of his friend, Severus. In an earlier couplet dense with rural imagery the poet uses agricultural terms figuratively yet they always retain a layer of their literal meaning. The poet writes:

> fertile pectus habes interque Helicona colentes
> uberius nulli prouenit ista seges. (*Pont*. 4.2.11-12)
>
> You have a fertile heart and among those cultivating Helicon, no cornfield prospers more than that of yours.

[82] The wine so named is famous as the pinnacle of excellence in the cultivation of wine. As it is named specifically from a region in Italy, this draws attention to the location of Severus and the focus of the thoughts of the exiled poet.

Those ‘cultivating Helicon’ are not farmers, but poets like Severus, who are ‘farming’ Helicon, home of the Muses and source of all poetic inspiration, for ideas.[83] The ‘cornfield’ or ‘crop’ (*seges*) can only be Severus’ poetry which prospers through recitation and publication and increases his ‘prosperity’. Used here among farming terms *colentes* can only be read as ‘cultivating’ although, among its many meanings, the same word can also mean ‘worshipping’. Used in the imperative, ‘worship!’ (*cole, Pont.* 4.2.49) in conjunction with ‘religion’ (*sacra, Pont*. 4.2.49) the meaning at the end of this poem is clear and has only a frisson of ambiguity from its earlier use. In this poem there seems to be no lack of ability or poetic skill. In an unusual use of a striking metaphor, ‘the mud of misfortune’ (*limo … malorum, Pont*. 4.2.19) the poet uses the image of blocked pipes causing a fountain to stop to illustrate his declining output of verse.[84] To reinforce his claim that in exile ‘verse flows from a more meager vein’ (*et carmen uena pauperiore fluit, Pont*. 4.2.20) the poet writes that ‘an infrequent character is traced by my fingers’ (*ducitur et digitis littera rara meis, Pont*. 4.2.24). However, the poet stresses this self deprecation to the point of disbelief. His use of the word *littera* is deliberately ambiguous; it means both the character (letter) of the alphabet and the name for correspondence (letters). To write that the individual characters are ‘infrequent’ (*rara*)[85] is belied by the number of characters

[83] See *OLD*, *colo*, 3, to till, cultivate, farm. (*in fig phrs*) … Ov. *Pont*. 4.2.11. The word could have shades of other meanings such as; *OLD*, 7, to pay constant attention to, to court, or *OLD*, 10, to promote the growth or advancement of, to develop, to foster, to keep up (friendship).

[84] Latin is full of similes and imagery but vivid metaphors such as this are rare. Dead metaphors are common in English where they are used so often they become clichés and lose the power to excite interest. Here the ‘mud’ (*limus, Pont*. 4.2.17) which blocks the fountain’s pipes is the same ‘mud’ (*limo, Pont*. 4.2.19) of misfortune which blocks the flow of literary inspiration in the mind of the poet.

[85] This poem, although short (50 lines) in comparison with others in this body of work, contains over 1500 individual characters, while there have been 30 letters/poems, comprising the first three books of *Epistulae ex Ponto* and 50 poems comprising his *Tristia*, sent by the poet from the Black Sea. If we consider the evidence for revision to the books of his *Fasti* during the years of exile (and Boyle, A.J., ‘Postscripts from the Edge: Exilic *Fasti* and Imperialised Rome’, *Ramus*, 26:7-28, 1997, argues convincingly that *Fasti* is exilic) then we see that the poet’s output of work belies this claim.

which make up this poem, and also the number of 'letters' (*epistula, Pont*. 4.2.5) sent from the shores of the Black Sea.

Among its many poetic devices, *ex Ponto* 4.2 has a remarkable image of futile effort.

> paruaque, ne dicam scribendi nulla uoluptas
> est mihi nec numeris nectere uerba iuuat,
> siue quod hinc fructus adeo non cepimus ullos,
> principium nostri res sit ut ista mali,
> siue quod in tenebris numerosos ponere gestus
> quodque legas nulli scribere carmen idem est. (*Pont.* 4.2.29-34)
>
> I have small pleasure, lest I say I have no pleasure, in writing, nor does it please me to weave words in rhythm. Either because it is from here I take no profit, indeed, that this very thing is the origin of my misfortune, or because to make rhythmic gestures in the dark and to write a poem which you may read to no-one, is the same thing.

These lines skillfully accentuate the poet's feelings of dissatisfaction, loss and displacement caused by his relegation to distant Tomis. As we read the word *fructus* (*Pont*. 4.2.31) the meaning is ambiguous. Following the 'small pleasure' (*paruaque … uoluptas, Pont*. 4.2.29) in the previous couplet, we first read it as 'enjoyment or pleasurable possession of something' but this is undermined by the agricultural imagery of the earlier part of the poem which would give the meaning 'fruitful profit' or 'yield' to the word *fructus*. Ambiguity is inherent in the word and shows that the poet now views his writing as the opposite of either pleasurable or profitable; his earlier poetry is shown as the very cause of his exile and the poetry he writes in exile, yields neither pleasure nor his longed-for recall to Rome. Also in a neatly condensed couplet, the poet sums up the advantages of sharing poetry with sympathetic friends, advantages that are now lost to the exile.

> excitat auditor studium laudataque uirtus
> crescit et inmensum gloria calcar habet. (*Pont*. 4.2. 35-6)
>
> A hearer encourages enthusiasm, ability grows with praise and fame is regarded as a great spur

Throughout *ex Ponto* 4.2, the poet's clever use of ambiguity and double meaning colours the reading of the poem. It also shows that his appeal to his friend is written with content and imagery styled to suit the interests of the recipient. The poet creates a conjunction between the wholesome profitable work of a farmer and the highly regarded work of a cultured poet: they both symbolize an abundance of those things which make life worth living. This increases the pathos of the poet's situation in a place where even farming is absent. He writes that he would like to be delighted by the land's cultivation but cannot because of war (*Pont*. 4.2.43-4).

This brings to mind an earlier poem, *ex Ponto* 1.8, also written to an individual named Severus, although from the content of the poem, this is not the same man as that addressed in *ex Ponto* 4.2. This Severus may be an old soldier, equally at home among the significant places in the city and at his villa outside Rome.[86] As Syme (1978) points out there is, in this poem, little reference to poetry while allusion is made to both war and agricultural practice. In this verse letter, the poet writes that he wishes to be able to 'cultivate pasture' (*glaeba … colenda, Pont*. 1.8.50) where he is now living but cannot, 'when a wall and a closed gate make the slightest boundary between me and the enemy' (*nobis minimum quos inter et hostem / discrimen murus clausaque porta facit, Pont*. 1.8.61-2).[87]

[86] Old age is evident from the 'strong threads' (*fortia fila, Pont.* 1.8.64) and can be compared with the threads of the poet's fate, twisted from 'black fleece' (*nigro uellere, Tr.* 4.1.61-64) while reference to war could indicate that Severus is a retired a soldier with land outside the city. Syme, R., *History in Ovid*, Oxford, 1978, pp. 80-1, see page 47 above on the identity of Severus..

[87] See also the same sentiments in this forceful comparison: 'it is sweet to spend time in the cultivation of fields; the barbarian enemy suffers not the soil to be turned' (*tempus in agorum cultu consumere dulce est / non patitur uerti barbarus hostis humum, Pont*. 2.7.67-70). The poet describes a place constantly prepared for war: a farmer ploughing with one hand and holding weapons in the other and a shepherd wearing a helmet, *Tr*. 5.10.23-26; and the poet himself with sword, shield and helmet, *Tr*. 4.1.73-4.

The first section of the poem stresses the dangers of the region and the warlike nature of the people but the greater part evokes Rome and its gardens as well as the surrounding countryside. Using place-specific names, such as the Clodian Road, the Flaminian Road and Umbria, the poet makes word pictures of significant places in and around the city drawing on a familiarity shared by the writer and the reader. The group of significant sites (the forums, temples, theatres, porticoes, fields and watercourses [*fora, aedes, theatra, porticus, campi, Virgineus euripi, Pont*. 1.8.35-38]) forms a vignette of the city and, repeated in a shortened version, (*campus, porticus, forum, Pont*. 1.8.65-6) accentuates the culture and civilization lost to the poet in exile. Nostalgia for past activities associated with the city gives way to nostalgia for the countryside and country pursuits such as gardening.

Using the first person for veracity, the poet tells of the fields 'I cultivated' (*colui Pont*. 1.8.45) although this claim is undercut by echoes of Virgil's *Georgics*. His list of sites in the city also brings to mind the city written into his former poetry, his *Amores* and *Ars Amatoria* as well as his *Tristia*.[88] When he writes that he wishes that he could farm goats and sheep and turn his hand to ploughing it sounds fanciful but is written as emphatically personal; it is the poet himself, 'I myself' (*ipse ego, Pont*. 1.8.51, 53) who wishes to do these things.[89] Such pastoral activities, however, remain wishes for the poet because of the threat of war. Farming is juxtaposed with warfare in this poem, rather than with poetry, as in *ex Ponto* 4.2. However, it is still a poet speaking, one who is concerned with words and their use and this is evident when he writes: 'I would learn the words that the Getic

[88] One cannot help thinking of the places in the city where the lover takes his girl, or the teacher of love recommends as good places to pick up girls and the places the poet's little book is to avoid (*Tr*. 1.1).
[89] Ovid's use of the present subjunctive form of verbs, (*uolo, duco, adicio, experior, Pont*. 1.8.52-58) adds weight to the notion that this is purely wishful thinking.

bullocks know and I would throw at them the usual threats' (*et dicam Getici quae norunt uerba iuuenci / adsuetas illis adiciamque minas, Pont*. 1.8.55-6). This personal note highlights the plight of the poet in a strange land where peaceful rural activities, rather than poets and poetry writing, are evoked as a balm for the 'usual cares' (*solitis … curis, Pont*. 1.8.53) that beset the heart of an exile.

From a close reading of some of the poems in Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto* we can see the poet's reaction to the distance of exile. The poet portrays his place of exile as both a geographical location and a place which shapes his feelings, through its position in relation to Rome. When banished to the end of the earth, Ovid draws on ethnographic stereotypes or a common knowledge of Rome in relation to the rest of the world (common at least to the educated elite who will read his poems) not only to establish the geography of his place of exile but also to keep his voice heard and understood in Rome. The poet uses literary and figurative examples and allusion to overcome the problem of describing this largely unknown place of exile in a way that will intrigue his audience, entertain the recipient of his letter and contribute to an understanding of the way the poet sees himself in his place of exile. He does this in order to make his plight in exile and his need for relocation understandable to his friends in Rome so that his poems will continue to be read and appreciated in his absence. The distance which necessitates such literary and ethnographic descriptions, also requires that they are sent as letters, the best means of communication available to the poet so long absent from Rome.

Chapter Two

Epistolarity in Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto*.

As well as using the familiar point of view and imagery of ethnographic stereotypes, Ovid writes each poem in the collection known as *Epistulae ex Ponto* in the form of an epistle or letter to his friends and acquaintances asking for help in securing a return to Rome or at least a transfer to a better place. Because he is so far from Rome, the poet is forced to communicate by means of poems and letters, he must use 'letters in place of spoken words' (*littera pro uerbis, Pont.* 1.7.1). Letters are a traditional and recognizable literary genre, so by using the form of a letter, the poet engages in a skilful exposition of his state of exile, with reference to time, place and distance in the only way he can from so far away. The letter functions as a familiar and personal link between friends in very different locations: the poet is in exile at the edge of the known world and his friends are at the centre of things in the city of Rome. At the beginning of the *Epistulae ex Ponto*, the poet refers to *Tristia*, the first collection of poems he sent from exile, in order to indicate what the reader can expect in this latest work, the same theme of sadness but now in a different form.

> inuenies, quamuis non est miserabilis index,
> non minus hoc illo triste quod ante dedi.
> rebus idem titulo differt, et epistula cui sit
> non occultato nomine missa docet. (*Pont.* 1.1.15-18)
>
> You will find, although the title is not wretched, this is no less sad than that which I sent before. In matter the same, the label differs, and each letter tells to whom it is sent, not concealing the names.

Here, in the first book of Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto* we can see a concrete example of the poet using something well known, his previous work,[1] 'that which I sent before' to explain the change he is about to introduce, that of using the names of his friends in the form of epistolary elegy or verse letters.[2] These later poems are to carry a label naming the recipients;[3] therefore they are more obviously letters. The use of a label or name, coupled with the word 'epistle' (*epistula*)[4] from the Greek *stello* 'to send', which in Latin literature signifies a formal letter from this Greek origin, means that each poem in the *Epistulae ex Ponto* is styled as a letter. Letters conform to a traditional and well known style or form of writing and are also necessary to bridge the distance between the poet in exile and his audience in Rome.

The poet has previously used this term, *epistula,* to designate a letter and although the word is not often found in poetry it is found in his *Heroides* because these are written in the form of letters.[5] Both Horace, and Propertius, use the term on only one occasion, yet Ovid uses it with increasing frequency in his exile poetry.[6] Although the poems in *Tristia*

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[1] For the accepted chronology of Ovid's poetry see *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* 1996, pp. 1084 - 1086: Ovid's first poems published about 16 B.C. and by A.D. 8 he was Rome's leading poet. Banished by Augustus in A.D. 8, he continued to write what we know as his exile poems. *Tristia* is a collection of five books containing individual poems (except for *Tr.* 2, a single poem of over 500 lines) and dispatched between A.D. 9 and A.D. 12 (reference to three winters, *Tr.* 5.10.1). *Epistulae ex Ponto* comprises four books of poems, almost all addressed to named individuals. Books 1-3 were sent as a collection, (*Pont.* 3.9.51-54) in A.D. 13 and Book 4 appeared, probably posthumously, about A.D. 16, (reference to Augustus death, *Pont.* 4.6 and his sixth summer, *Pont.* 4.10.1). See also Wheeler A. L, (tr) and G.P. Gould, (ed) *Ovid. Tristia, Ex Ponto*, Cambridge, Mass., 1996, pp. xxxiiiff., and Green, P., *Ovid: The Poems of Exile*, Harmondsworth, 1994(a), p. 293.

[2] I refer to these named individuals and the impact of so many well known names below in Chapter Four.

[3] There are a few unnamed letters: *ex Ponto* 1.4 and 3.1 (to his wife); 3.6 and 3.7 (to friends) 4.3 and 4.16 (to enemies) and one to a neighbour, King Cotys, *Pont.* 2.9.

[4] The word *epistula* is unambiguous and mainly occurs in the opening lines of the poems. In *ex Ponto* we see the word *epistula* used often, (*Pont.* 1.1.17; 1.2.5; 1.9.1; 3.5.1; 3.7.5; 4.2.5; 4.6.1; 4.11.9).

[5] I refer to the letters of *Heroides* at length below, see note 43. The word *epistula* is found in the *Heroides* at: 4.3; 6.7; 13.165; 15.219; 16.13; 17.1, 65; 18.217; 20.241; 21.145.

[6] Horace's *Epistles.* Apart from the title, possibly added later, the word *epistula* is found only at *Ep*. 2.2.22. Propertius uses the word once in letter from his mistress: 3.16.1.

are mainly in the form of elegiac laments, a few of them have some characteristics of a letter and appear to be addressed to his wife or friends.[7] Frequent use of such distinctive words as *epistula* and the more ambiguous word for 'letter' (*littera*)[8] identify the epistolary form and call to mind the poet's earlier verse letters and also the many prose letters of personal correspondence.

The letter as a literary form is known from the prose letters ascribed to the ancient Greek philosophers Epicurus and Plato, while the first extant writing on epistolary style is attributed to Demetrius, who probably wrote during the first century B.C.[9] He writes, while discussing the plain style of writing, that the letter is to be more than one side of a conversation (223) as suggested by Artemon, the editor of Aristotle's *Letters*, but suggests that a letter should be more carefully constructed than dialogue (224). He also stresses that a letter should not be long (228) and should be written in plain language, should 'call figs, figs' (229), and that subjects such as logic and science should be avoided (231) because a letter is an expression of the writer's character (227), of affection and courtesy (232), and

[7] The word *epistula* is found in Ovid's *Tristia*, 3.3.1; 4.7.9; 5.2.1; 5.4.1; 5.7.1and 5.13.11, 33.

[8] The word *littera, litterae* can mean a letter, like an epistle – that which is sent. In addition it can mean the alphabet or characters which form writing; when used as a verb, the act of forming words or writing. It can also mean erudition or knowledge and is often used with all these meanings. For use in *ex Ponto* of *littera*, when the predominant meaning is the letter itself (*Pont.* 1.7.1; 1.9.4; 2.3.67; 2.6.3; 2.7.1; 3.9.52; 4.8.1; 4.9.8; 4.11.15; 4.14.26).

[9] In one of the prose letters ascribed to him Plato wrote about the style of his letters, especially his customary greeting of 'I wish you joy or well-doing' which he states is also at the entrance to a shrine at Delphi. Plato, *Epistle,* 3.315b-c. See also his opening to *Epistle*, 8.352b. Bury, R.G., (tr) *Plato: Timaeus, Critias, Cleitophon, Menexenus, Epistles*, Cambridge, Mass., 1966. Demetrius, writing on 'clearness ... and the plain style' (203) writes on 'the epistolary style since it too should be plain' (223-35). Rhys Roberts, W., (tr) *Demetrius: On Style*, Cambridge Mass., 1965. See also: Grube, G.M.A., *A Greek Critic: Demetrius on Style*, Toronto, 1961, p. v. Though there is some controversy over the precise dating of Demetrius, the majority, with Grube, say that he was writing about the 2nd century B.C. Grube writes '…. in any case there can be little doubt that the treatise belongs to Hellenistic times, and is the only extant critical text between Aristotle on one hand, and on the other, the writers of the first century B.C. in Rome, whose works we possess'.

styled to suit the recipient (234). These points form the basis of epistolary theory and can be found to underpin all later discussions about letter writing.

Ovid relies on well-known markers and conventions associated with the epistolary genre to indicate the letter form of these verse letters. Greeting words (*salutem* and *uale*)[10] and words of direction, especially those used to signal distance such as 'send' (*mitto*) and 'go' (*ite*), words for reading and writing (*lego, scribo*) and reference to expected or received replies, such as 'you mention' (*refers, Pont,* 3.9.2) or 'your letter' (*littera …/ … tua, Pont.* 4.8.1-2), are all indicators of the letter form and are evident throughout the *Epistulae ex Ponto*. Personal or subjective content and the regularized use of grammatical person (first for the sender's voice and second for the evoked recipient) are conventions of the letter and create an understood background from which the poet can deviate or to which he can add something new. It is the use of this common literary tradition, the formal characteristics of an epistle or letter, which increases both the complexity of meaning and the power of appeal of the verses in Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto*.[11]

Obviously prose letters were common in antiquity and the term 'letter' refers to both private letters of communication and official documents sent over distance to authorize and/or replace verbal orders, business contracts and official duties. The many letters of

[10] The word *salutem* means 'greeting' or 'good health' or 'wellbeing' and occurs many times, especially in the *Epistulae ex Ponto*: 1.3.1; 1.7.1; 1.7.26; 1.8.1; 1.10.1; 2.2.3; 2.3.98, (twice) 2.5.2, 4, 11; 2.6.2; 2.7.1; 2.8.15, (twice) 3.2.1, 4; 3.4.1; 3.5.5; 3.9.46; 4.5.23; 4.9.1, 12; 4.13.3, 49; 4.14.5; 4.15.3, 41. It is found three times only in *Tristia*: 1.3.34 (with *uale* at 1.3.57) 3.7.1; and 5.13.1, (with *uale* at 5.13.34).

[11] Helzle, Martin, *Publii Ovidii Nasonis Epistularum ex Ponto liber IV*, Zurich, New York, 1989, p. 8, writes: 'By naming the addressees in *ex Ponto* Ovid's appeal becomes more specific and therefore more urgent'. See my Chapter Four.

Cicero are an example of the prevalence of prose letters.[12] Ovid refers to the many prose letters that have passed between himself and his poet friend Severus (*Pont* 4.2.5-14)[13] and to the letters and gifts he has received while in exile.[14] Ovid himself has written on the subject of prose letters, explaining the style suitable for a love letter and the role letters play in the art of seduction.[15]

Reference to prose letters is found throughout Greek literature: the earliest extant reference is in Homer (*Iliad* 6.160-80).[16] Letters are found in the histories of Herodotus and

[12] Although there is no certainty that Ovid was aware of Cicero's letters as their publication date is vague and they do not compare as literature with the verse letters of Horace and Propertius, their preservation attests to the common use of the prose letter form. See Davisson, M.H.T., 'The Functions of Openings in Ovid's Exile Epistles', *Classical Bulletin*, 58:2, 17-22, 1988, as well as Davisson, M.H.T., '*Tristia* 5.13 and Ovid's use of Epistolary Form and Content', *Classical Journal*, 80:1, 238-246, 1984. See also Rosenmayer, P.A., *Ancient Epistolary Theory*, Cambridge, 2001, p. 5, who looks at the role and function of the letter in connection with power, authority and deception. She sees a distinction, not so much between prose and verse letters as between those composed as the imagined letters of fictional characters and those of writers and readers who are not invented.

[13] Ovid writes: 'but letters, bereft of meter, have never ceased to go, one after the other, in obliging interchange' (orba tamen numeris cessauit epistula numquam / ire per alternas officiosa uices *Pont*. 4.2.5-6). See my Chapter One, page 45-54 for close reading of *ex Ponto* 4.2.

[14] He refers to letters of many types: as consolation from Rufinus, *Pont.*1.3.3; as news from Cotta Maximus, *Pont.* 1.9.1; as comfort from Cotta Maximus, *Pont.* 2.3.67; as reproof from Graecinus, *Pont.* 2.6.5; as a report from Brutus about the reception of his verse, *Pont.* 3.9.1-3; as a late but pleasing letter from Sullius, *Pont.* 4.8.1; and a gift, perhaps a silver medallion showing the faces of Augustus, Livia and Tiberius, *Pont*. 2.8.3.

[15] Ovid refers to epistolary style when he explains the suitable style for an amorous letter: 'Your language should inspire trust and your words should be familiar yet coaxing too, so that you seem to be speaking in her presence'.(*sit tibi credibilis sermo consuetaque verba / Blanda tamen, praesens ut videare loqui, A.A.* 1.467-8). He explores the role of letter writing in seduction: for the man (*A.A.* 1.437-486) and (*A.A,* 2.395-6) as well as for women (*A.A*. 3.469-98).

[16] In Homer, *Iliad* 6.160-80, a letter of introduction is given to 'Bellerophontes the blameless' which contains instructions for his death, after a false accusation of rape, but serves to show the illustrious genealogy of Diomedes' opponent Glaukos. Herodotus writes of letters used for instructions, 4.48-50. He links letters and deception when he writes how they can be sent secretly; hidden in the body of a hare (1.123) and on the head of a slave under the hair (5.35) and he also writes of the speedy delivery of letters in the Persian Empire, (8.98). Thucydides writes of political and military correspondence, illustrating treachery and deceit; between Xerxes and the king (1.128-9) and containing instructions to kill the messenger (1.132-5). He writes on the interpretation of intercepted foreign letters (4.50); and how letters are used to add authority (7.8, 14, and 16); as a warning (8.33, 39 and 51); ordering death (8.45). He writes of the unusual and special coded message of the Spartans written on a strip of leather wound round a specially shaped stick which could only be read if re-wound on an identically shaped stick (1.131). Euripides, in *Hippolytus, Iphigenia in Aulis* and *Iphigenia in Tauris* uses the letter to further the plot. Green, D. and Lattimore, R., eds., *The Complete Greek Tragedies, I, II, IV*, Chicago, 1955-59. Ovid refers to the story of *Iphigenia in Tauris* twice in his exile poems (*Tr.* 4.4.63-82 and *Pont*. 3.2.43-96) to emphasize the bonds of friendship and love of homeland. In *Tristia* the story is

Thucydides; the plays of Euripides (*Hippolytus* 855-80, *Iphigenia in Tauris* 581ff and 759-95, and *Iphigenia in Aulis* 98-157); and the 'letter' from Acontius to Cydippe in Callimachus' *Aetia*, (3.67-75) is well known. Although the letter in each of these examples is a part of the narrative rather than the structure or form itself, its presence establishes the traditional function of the letter, which is to convey greetings, orders, appeals or information over distance. These examples also show the traditional power of the letter, not only to deceive and betray but also to add authority, through the name or seal, to its call for response or action.

Letters written in verse, however, are written using figurative or metaphorical language as well as literary allusion and have a more formal structure than prose letters. Ready examples are: poems of Catullus which resemble verse epistles,[17] a letter poem by Propertius (4.3) and the two books of Horace's *Epistles*. When written in verse, epistles still perform the traditional functions of a letter but they have an additional impact and depth because they appeal to both the person addressed and to a wider audience. Bowditch (2001) writes that the verse epistle is 'a genre that assumes the expression of private intimacies even as it expresses them to a public readership'.[18] Ovid relies on his readers' knowledge of epistolary conventions from prose letters, but more especially from the verse

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shortened to show that recognition among friends and siblings occurs through speech but in *ex Ponto* recognition is by means of a letter, as it is in the drama of Euripides. The story is introduced into Ovid's letter to Cotta Maximus (*Pont.* 3.2.37-43) as a tale told, possibly in Getic (40) by an old man from Taurus, one of the barbarian throng among whom Ovid now lives. With this story, the poet stresses the wide coverage of literary heritage but also accentuates his separation from Rome and the importance of letters and language as a means of communication.

[17] Catullus is <u>not</u> renowned for verse epistles but some of his poems make use of the conventions of the letter form. In poem 35 the poet addresses a papyrus, sending it to tell his friend to come, poem 13 is a dinner invitation, and poem 68 is a verse written in reply to a letter '*epistolium*' sent by a friend. Ovid, in his exile poems, develops the idea of personification, addressing his book (*liber, Tr.* 1.1.1) a letter (*litera, Tr.* 3.7.1-2) and the poem itself when he writes, 'Go! Light elegies,' (*Ite, leues elegi, Pont.* 4.5.1).

[18] Bowditch, P.L., *Horace and the Gift Economy of Patronage,* Berkley, 2001, p. 167. See also Oliensis, E., 'Life after Publication: Horace *Epistles* 1.20', *Arethusa,* 28:2, 209-224, 1995.

letters of such contemporary Latin poets as Horace and Propertius to add persuasive meaning to his poems in the *Epistulae ex Ponto*.

The epistolarity of Horace's collection of *Epistles* depends less upon the title (possibly a later addition) than on its recognizable form and content.[19] As the first such collection of verse epistles published, their assemblage creates an expectation that the poems will be of one genre, which serves to draw attention to their epistolary form.[20] The verses in this collection give the impression of epistles or letters, not through such generic characteristics as formulaic salutations and closure, but rather through the well known epistolary properties: conversational style; plain language; a focus on subjective and personal topics including contemporary news as well as the indication of an addressee at some distance from the writer. Both Horace and Ovid take these similar epistolary qualities and produce innovative, yet very different, verse epistles.

Demetrius writes that a letter should not be long and should be written in plain language.[21] Both Horace and Ovid adhere to this, for the most part. Horace limits the majority of the poems in his *Epistles* 1 to under 100 lines, the longest poem in this book, to Lollius, has 111 lines (*Ep.* 1.18) and the shortest, a letter of recommendation, has just 13 lines (*Ep.*

[19] Mayer, R., (ed) *Horace Epistles, Book 1*, Cambridge, 1994, p. 1, writes that Horace invented a new poetic genre in that he became the 'discoverer' of a new verse form, the epistle, and that he first put together a compilation of verse letters and published them as a collection about 19 B.C. Mayer says that the '… novelty is to be seen in the synthesis of the conversational hexameter of his *sermones* and the more personal addresses found in the lyric odes'. Hardie, Philip, *Ovid's Poetics of Illusion*, Cambridge, 2002, p. 297 writes that Horace's epistles 'might be regarded as epistolary essays in the Socratic dialogue'.

[20] Most ancient collections of poems are divided into 'books' according to similarities of metre or genre. The poems of Catullus for example are usually divided into three groups according to length and meter; the first book (poems 1-60) referred to as the *polymetric poems* have been so grouped because of their variety of both metre and genre; the grouping of the poems in the second book is self explanatory, and they are referred to as the *long poems* while the third book (grouped by genre) is called the *elegiac fragments*.

[21] Demetrius, *On Style*, (223-35).

1.9). Ovid's epistles from exile are mostly just under 100 lines although one to his wife has 166 lines (*Pont.* 3.1) and his shortest is written to Gallio, 22 lines to console him on the loss of his wife (*Pont.* 4.11).[22] Horace abandons the shorter form in *Epistles* 2 and as a result these poems are less like letters, especially the one named in antiquity *Ars Poetica*, which is a dissertation of 475 lines.

The *Epistles* of Horace are written in hexameters, the metre of didactic poetry and well suited to the letter form, as it is capable of being conversational in tone yet formal and deliberate. This conversational tone is a continuation from his previously published *Satires* (referred to by Horace as *sermones* or 'talks').[23] Horace differentiates between the lofty hexameter of epic and his own poetry by referring to his 'talks' (*sermones*)[24] as verses which 'crawl along the ground' (*repentis per humum Ep*. 2.1. 251). Although he predicts that they will end up being used by schoolboys learning letters (*Ep.* 1.20.17-18), he makes sure his praises of Augustus are better than useless wrapping paper (*Ep*. 2.1.269-70). By contrast, Ovid uses elegiac couplets for his epistles, both in the *Heroides* and in the *Epistulae ex Ponto*, which links them with his earlier, if unconventional, use of elegy for his didactic *Ars Amatoria.* His epistles gain a personal or conversational tone by exploiting

[22] When giving advice on writing and answering letters, Ovid suggests that his mistress reply with a very short letter, just one word, 'come!' (*veni! Amores,*1.11.28).

[23] Allen, W. et. al., 'Horace's First Book of *Epistles* as Letters', *Classical Journal*, 68:1, 119-133, 1972, p. 122, suggests that the *Epistles* of Horace are somewhere '…between correspondence and treatises'. See also Dilke, O.H.W., 'Horace and the Verse Letter' *Horace,* C. Costa, (ed) London and Boston, 94-112, 1973.

[24] Rudd, Niall, (ed) *Horace, Epistles II and Epistle to the Pisones, (Ars Poetica)*, Cambridge, 1989, pp. 117-118, in his commentary writes, '…they occupy a relatively low position in the hierarchy of genres – certainly below epic, tragedy and choral lyric'. He points out that 'in the first 17 lines of this epistle, for example, the tone is formal and deferential…' and that at lines 251-6 we see that Horace '…is giving us a glimpse of what he cannot, or will not, do, except for short periods'. See also, Russell, D.A., 'Ars Poetica' *Horace*, C. Costa, (ed) London and Boston, 113-134, 1973.

the intimacy and appeal of elegy, through its conventional use for love poetry as well as its association with prayer and funeral lament.[25]

Although the verse letter picks up the convention that a letter is a substitute for a conversation between two people, the writer is central and this allows for a fresh and more personal approach to issues and topics previously explored in verse. The recipient of the letter, while often named, is always seen in relation to the writer. Bowditch writes that the epistle '…illustrates …this language of self, for correspondence as such mediates, and thus fixes in relation to one another, two subject positions'.[26] Both Horace and Ovid address their verse poems to named persons. Horace uses names in all except two, one to a book (*Ep.*1.20) and one to the foreman on his farm (*Ep.* 1.14). Among the 46 poems in Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto* only six are unnamed, four of which are addressed to either a friend or an enemy (*Pont.* 3.6; 3.7; 4.3 and 4.16) and two are addressed to his unnamed wife (*Pont.* 1.4 and 3.1). Except for his patron Maecenas (*Ep.* 1.1; 1.7; 1.19) and the young Tiberius (*Ep.* 1.9) most of Horace's addressees are otherwise unknown, while the majority of the men mentioned by Ovid are prominent citizens.[27]

By naming the recipients of their letters the two writers are positioned within their social group: Horace as the son of a freedman finds favour with Augustus and Maecenas through his pleasing poetry; Ovid is an equestrian by birth and one of the elite (although he

[25] In Ovid's hands elegy is protean and his poetry gains depth and richness because he often blends the genre of elegy with other styles or genres. Ovid's *Tristia* looks back to the origin of elegy as funeral lament while we see in his *Heroides* and the *Epistulae ex Ponto* elegy combined with the epistolary genre. Horace's *Epistles* do not follow this tradition of evolution from lament or erotic elegy.
[26] Bowditch, P.L., *Horace and the Gift Economy of Patronage*, 2001, p. 166.
[27] I explore further Ovid's use of named addressees for his letters, in Chapter Four.

refrained from the pursuit of offices which could lead to the senate)[28] and as such socializes with the important people in Rome and maybe the imperial family.[29] The name of the recipient in the letter serves to add a complex of layers to the poem we read, as both the writer and also the absent addressee are kept in mind. In the poems of both Horace and Ovid, this is further complicated by reference, within some of the poems, to another person as well as the addressee. Horace, in one letter, asks Florus where 'Claudius, stepson of Augustus' is campaigning (*Ep.* 1.3) which raises our awareness of the imperial family and also of where Horace stands in relation to its members. Celsus Albinovanus is named as a member of the staff of Nero (*Ep.*1.8) and the letter to Tiberius naturally includes the name of the friend being recommended by Horace (*Ep* 1.9). Ovid also mentions the imperial family in many of his poems, which is hardly surprising considering the part played by the *princeps* in his exile. Ovid appeals directly to Augustus (*Tr.* 2) and in many poems he pleads that the recipient should also appeal on his behalf (*Pont.*1.2; 2.8; 3.1). Horace positions Iccius in (*Ep.* 1.12) both physically and socially, the former by the name Sicily, the latter by the use of Agrippa's name. Ovid includes an aside to a named friend, Fabius Maximus, in a letter to Brutus (*Pont.* 4.6), he laments the death of Celsus in a letter to Cotta Maximus (*Pont.* 1.9)[30] and mentions many other poets by name in a letter to an unnamed enemy (*Pont.*4.16). Both Horace and Ovid dispense with the formulaic opening

[28] In *Tristia,* 4.10, the so called 'autobiographical poem' Ovid tells of his social position as born into an an equestrian family. He therefore had the means to choose the life of a poet rather than rise through the ranks to the senate, as he writes: 'The senate house awaited me, but I narrowed my purple stripe: that was a burden too great for my powers' (*curia restabat: claui mensura caocta est; / maius erat nostris viribus ullud onus. Tristia,* 4.10.35-6). See Millar, F., 'Ovid and the *Domus Augusta:* Rome seen from Tomoi', *Journal of Roman Studies*, 83, 1-17, 1993.

[29] Wheeler A. L, 1996, Introduction, p. xvi, gives his opinion on Ovid's intimacy with the imperial household. Ovid writes to Germanicus, *Pont.* 2.1, and mentions the friendship links between imperial kin and his wife in poems, *Pont* 1.2 and 3.1. See Syme, R., *History in Ovid*, 1978, pp. 71-93, for the social status of Ovid's friends, and a discussion on the friends of Germanicus.

[30] Celsus is a common name in Rome and not the same man as the one mentioned by Horace.

of a prose letter (the writer's name in the nominative and that of the addressee in the dative) as they both usually address the recipient in the conversational tone of the vocative.

The letter form is indicated by both Horace and Ovid in a variety of other ways. Ovid often uses *epistula, epistulae,* or *littera, litterae* to identify his poem as a letter whereas Horace uses *epistula* only once when he refers to a letter of his not received by Florus (*Ep.* 2.2.22).[31] The most usual indication of a letter is a formal salutation or greeting. Horace uses this rarely, as the opening in only two poems, when he writes 'To Celsus Albinovanus greetings and good wishes!' (*Celso gaudere et bene rem gerere Albinovano, Ep.* 1.8) and 'To Fuscus, lover of the city, I, lover of the country, send greetings' (*Urbis amatorem Fuscum salvere iubemus / ruris amatores… Ep.*1.10). Ovid, on the other hand, often opens his letters with a greeting and also frequently includes his own name.[32] We can see this, for example, when he writes, 'this greeting, Rufinus, your friend Naso sends to you' (*Hanc tibi Naso tuus mittit, Rufine, salutem, Pont.* 1.3).[33] The letter form is also shown by reference to letters received (or not received) and to complaints or queries which require an answer. Horace gives his *Epistles* the impression of a letter by asking questions about places visited such as, 'What did Chios and famous Lesbos seem like to you Bullatius?' (*Quid tibi visa Chios, Bullati, notaque Lesbos, Ep.* 1.11) and he even anticipates a question as an excuse for writing, 'In case you should have to ask about my farm, my good

[31] The constraints of hexametric scansion limit Horace's use of *epistula* to the nominative singular. *Littera* is not used at all except as *litterulis* (*Ep.* 2.2.7).meaning 'literary composition or activities, also knowledge of books, erudition'. *OLD*, s.v. § 4.

[32] Ovid uses his own name 28 times in *ex Ponto*; 1.1.1; 1.3.1; 1.5.2; 1.7.4; 1.7.69; 1.8.1, 30; 1.10.1; 2.2.2; 2.4.1; 2.5.1; 2.6.2; 2.10.2, 15; 2.11.2; 3.1.3; 3.4.2; 3.5.4, 44; 3.6.1; 3.7.13; 4.3.10; 4.6.2; 4.8.34; 4.9.2; 4.14.14; 4.15.2; 4.16.1. I look at the significance of an increased use of the name 'Naso' in Chapter Three.

[33] Davisson, M.H.T., 'The Functions of Openings in Ovid's Exile Epistles', 1988, p. 18 n 6, lists ten epistles with a variation on this salutation; *Pont.*1.3; 1.7; 1.8; 1.10; 2.2; 2.5; 3.2; 3.4; 3.5; 4.9. See also MacArthur, Elizabeth J., *Extravagant Narratives: Closure and Dynamics in the Epistolary Form*, New Jersey, 1990.

Quinctius' (*Ne perconteris, fundus meus, optime Quincti, Ep.* 1.16). Ovid also makes reference to expected or received replies, such as 'you mention' (*refers, Pont.* 3.9.2) or 'your letter' (*littera …/ … tua, Pont.* 4.8.1-2) and to questions he thinks may be asked, 'perchance you may ask by whom this letter is sent,' (*forsitan haec a quo mittatur epistula quaeras, Pont.* 1.2.5) and in this way both poets signal the letter form.

One of the most significant reasons for writing a letter is to overcome the distance between the writer and the addressee. The physical distance caused by Ovid's exile in Tomis requires that everything he writes must be sent over a great distance and when his poems of lament (*Tristia*) cause no change in his circumstances he turns to sending the more personal correspondence of addressed verse letters. In *Epistulae ex Ponto* all the poems engage in some way with Ovid's distance from Rome, as an exile at the end of the known world. Horace, however, writes either from Rome or his farm in the country, to people in Rome or the country (*Ep.* 1.1; 1.7; 1.16) and to his friends who are away overseas (*Ep.*1.2; 1.3; 1.8; 1.9; and1.12) but often the idea of distance and separation is nominal, as when an invitation is written to Torquatus although both he and Horace are in Rome (*Ep.* 1.5). Horace writes also to bridge a social distance when he writes a letter of recommendation to the young Tiberius on behalf of a friend (*Ep.* 1.9) and when he writes a letter to say he is unable to write a fitting letter to Augustus (*Ep.* 2.1) and in so doing, complies with the request.[34] Ovid appeals to King Cotys (*Pont.* 2.9) as a neighbour and fellow poet and so minimizes both the physical and social distance between them.

[34] Rolfe, J.C. (tr) *Suetonius, Vol. II, Lives of Illustrious Men*, Cambridge Mass., 1970, p. 487.

Subjective topics, such as health and feelings as well as contemporary news of local events, are often found in personal letters and the verse letters of both Horace and Ovid are no exception. Partly because the letter is only one side of an imagined dialogue, the writer has prominence, his thoughts, feelings and state of health are paramount and the addressee serves as a foil and contrast. The use of the grammatical first person and reference to his own health (*Ep.* 1.1; 1.7; 1.8; 1.11; 1.12; 1.15) allows us to hear the voice of the writer clearly in Horace's *Epistles*. He writes about contemporary news (*Ep.* 1.12.25-9) and as well as giving a self-portrait, he even refers to his birthday (*Ep.* 1.20), the first Roman poet to do so in verse.[35] Ovid writes about his own birthday in a very different tone (*Tristia* 3.13.1-2) and often refers to his state of health (*Pont*. 1.2; 1.4; 3.1) with an especially vivid description to be found in *ex Ponto* 1.10.[36] Ovid also refers to his many woes (*Pont.*2.7), his fear of being forgotten (*Pont.*2.10; 4.15) and his fears for his life and safety (*Pont.*1.2; 1.3; 2.7). Horace uses his own name rarely (*Ep.*1.14.5), whereas Ovid refers to himself as 'Naso' in many of the poems in the *Epistulae ex Ponto*.[37]

A verse epistle is complex, as the letter format both complements and complicates the poem. Both Horace and Ovid use the epistolary form to write about poetics or literary matters in general as well as about themselves as poets. Horace in *Ars Poetica* sacrifices the epistolary form for a discussion on poetics, but in other *Epistles* he achieves a balance between the personal appeal of a letter and its didactic attributes when he discusses the value and writing of poetry: giving it up (*Ep.*1.1), how poetry is superior to philosophy

[35] Mayer, R., (ed) *Horace Epistles*, 1994, p. 274, writes: 'H was born on 8 December 65B.C., so he wrote this between that date in 21 B.C. and 20 B.C.; this is the first reference by a Roman poet to his birthday; cf. Ov. *Tr.* 4.10.5-6, Prudentius *praef.* 24'.
[36] I expand on the significance of Ovid's vivid description of his state of health (*Pont.* 1.10) in Chapter Four.
[37] I return to this topic in Chapter Three below.

(*Ep.*1.2), how a soldier can be a poet (*Ep.*1.3), how poetry brings happiness (*Ep.*1.4), how poems should be delivered (*Ep.*1.13), poetry and wine (*Ep.*1.19), poetry and publication (*Ep* 1.20), while still retaining the conversational tone of a letter. All of Ovid's poems in the *Epistulae ex Ponto* are letters, about himself as a poet and his views on poetry now that he is in exile so far from his audience in Rome. He writes about his earlier poems (*Pont.* 1.1), his reasons for writing poetry (*Pont.* 1.5), poets and friendship (*Pont.* 2.4), poetry, travel and talk (*Pont.* 2.10), the reception of his poems and the art of poetry (*Pont.* 3.9), his problems writing poetry in exile (*Pont.* 4.2) and his ability to write 'Getic' poetry (*Pont.* 4.13), all in an intimate epistolary style.

Although a letter usually deals with personal topics, occasionally both Horace and Ovid use the form for more philosophical or scientific subjects. Bowditch suggests in the case of Horace's *Epistles*, that the 'verse epistle permits its creator to draw on the letter's generic affiliations with philosophical practice…. [to scrutinize]…. the overlapping discourses of friendship and patronage...'[38] Horace discusses the relationship between patron and client (*Ep.* 1.7) and debates the relative merits of the city and the country (*Ep.* 1.15), while Ovid uses literary examples of the duty and bonds of friendship and gives a clearly scientific and previously unknown explanation for the Black Sea freezing in winter to his friend Albinovanus (*Pont.*4.10.35ff).[39]

We can see that the *Epistles* of Horace and Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto* have some epistolary properties in common, although the two authors adopt the epistolary conventions in very

[38] Bowditch, P.L., *Horace and the Gift Economy of Patronage*, 2001, p. 170.
[39] In this poem the poet's use of mythological examples and ethnographic stereotypes are thrown into relief by his scientific explanation of the sea freezing. See my Chapter One.

different ways. Ovid uses these properties to a greater extent in his *Epistulae ex Ponto* than Horace does in his *Epistles*. Because of this the poems of Ovid are more like letters, since from his distant place of exile, he needs to appeal in a new and personal way to his friends in Rome. In the works of both authors the epistolarity of the verse serves to arouse our interest so that we read the poems with an appreciation of their increased complexity and depth.

The poems in Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto* also share epistolary qualities with Propertius 4.3 as well as his own earlier exploration of the genre, his *Heroides.* In these poems we can see a greater similarity of theme and content than can be seen between Ovid's and Horace's *Epistles*. Both Propertius and Ovid give voice, in the form of elegiac letters, to fictional heroines who, for the most part, have been left, betrayed or abandoned by their heroes. Both poets use the letter form to accentuate that, because of the constraints of distance or protocol, a letter is the only means of communication available to these women. Among the love elegies of Propertius, one poem, 4.3, is in the form of an imaginary letter written by Arethusa to her absent husband Lycotas,[40] while all the elegies in Ovid's innovative *Heroides* are written as letters,[41] and almost all are written by fictional characters who are

[40] Camps, W. (ed) *Propertius Elegies, Book IV*, Cambridge, 1965, p. 77, writes: 'We do not know whether these names conceal real persons or whether the whole situation is imaginary. Nor do we know whether the idea of imagining a letter in elegiac verse from a woman to her absent man came first to Propertius or to Ovid, who developed it in his *Heroides* with mythological characters for correspondents'.

[41] Ovid considered his *Heroides* to be innovative. In his advice for girls to read his own works, he describes his 'Letters' as new; 'or let some Letter be read by you with practiced voice / He first invented this art, not known to others' (*Vel tibi composita cantetur Epistola uoce / Ignotum hoc aliis ille nouauit opus. A.A.* 3.345-6). Kennedy, D.F., 'Epistolarity: The *Heroides*', *Cambridge Companion to Ovid*, P. Hardie, (ed) Cambridge, 2002, pp. 217-18, writes that Ovid's claim to invention has generated 'considerable scholarly debate' but that this claim is not 'fantastic or immodest' because the 'tradition of 'female complaint', the Spanish *novela sentimental* of the fifteenth century and the epistolary novel of the eighteenth century, have long been acknowledged to carry Ovid's stamp'. Rosenmayer, P.A., *Ancient Epistolary Theory*, 2001, p.130, writing of *Heroides* 20 says, 'Ovid develops the epistolary device further so that epistolarity comes to define his narrative's very form.

already known from previous literary works.[42] The *Epistulae ex Ponto*, however, is a series of elegiac letters from the poet to his fellow Roman poets and friends, most of whom can be plausibly identified with historical Romans.[43] Because of the generic characteristics of the letter form discussed earlier (the use of self-identifying words such as *epistula*; a formulaic opening; a conversational style; a subjective viewpoint; a description of the act of reading and writing; and an indication that the addressee is at some distance from the writer), these poems are recognizable as letters and both Ovid and Propertius make use of this epistolary form to emphasize the plight of the letter writer. The letter form is unmistakable in Propertius 4.3, Ovid's *Heroides* and his *Epistulae ex Ponto*. Propertius uses the word *epistula,*[44] rarely while Ovid also uses it sparingly in the single epistles of his *Heroides*. He uses it a little more often in the double letters of *Heroides* and more frequently again in his *Epistulae ex Ponto*.

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[42] *Heroides* 15, is from Sappho, who is understood to be the Greek lyric poet from Lesbos. Knox, P., (ed) *Ovid: Heroides, Select Epistles*, Cambridge, 1995, p. 14, writes: '…the narrative setting of this poem is not drawn from any work of literature, but from the biography of Sappho and the later traditions surrounding her life'. Knox points out, p. 36, that the authenticity of this poem is also debated, as this epistle is not found in any medieval MS of *Heroides* and 'owes its location in modern editions to Daniel Heinsius who placed it before the double epistles in his edition of 1629'. Ovid's source text for the epistles of Phyllis, Oenone and Canace is unknown and there is no doubt that knowledge of the literary sources for the majority of Ovid's *Heroides* adds a depth and complexity to each character in our reading.

[43] Syme, R., *History in Ovid*, 1978, establishes that the persons to whom Ovid's letters are addressed are historical or non-fictitious. However Rosenmeyer, P.A., 'Ovid's *Heroides* and *Tristia*: Voices from Exile', *Ramus*, 26:1, 29-56, 1997, p. 51, writes: 'On the most basic level all letters are fictions … whether the writer claims to write in his own voice or that of a mythical figure, the moment he puts words to paper he invents a self, a life, a set of feelings. Based on a process of selection and self-censorship, the letter is a construction, not a reflection of reality'. I look further at the significance of names in my Chapters Three and Four, below.

[44] The only time the word *epistula* is used by Propertius is at 3.16.1 where he writes about a letter received at midnight from his mistress asking him to come to her. In his verse epistle, 4.3, Propertius uses *mandata* to mean 'message or directive'. In his other poems the word has a more emphatic meaning of 'charge, commission or command', 2.29a.20; 3.6.37; 3.7.55; 3.16.7; 3. 23. 11; 4.7.71 and is not indicative of the letter form. Ovid uses *epistula* many times to indicate a letter in his *Heroides* (4.3; 6.7; 13.165; 15.129; 16.13; 17.1,65; 18.217; 20.241; 21.145. Ovid uses *mandata* with its more emphatic meaning, 'directive, charge or commission' in *Heroides* (11.127, 13.7, 143, 145; 15.105; 15.105; 16.305) and in *ex Ponto*, (2.2.123; 2.11.23; 3.2.91).

I look closely at *Heroides* 13, as just one of a great variety of letters which make up Ovid's *Heroides,* because of the many similarities between this letter and Propertius 4.3 and I also compare both these letters with those of the *Epistulae ex Ponto.*[45] In this way I draw attention to how the letter form makes the sentiments expressed in the poetry more personal and adds complexity and depth to the character portrayed as the writer.[46] In a variation of a prose letter's opening salutation both writer and recipient are named and greetings are sent: Propertius' Arethusa 'sends' (*mittit* 4.3.1) her 'messages, commands, directives,' (*mandata*, 4.3.1) to Lycotas; in Ovid's *Heroides* 13, Laodamia 'sends' (*mittit, Her.*13.1) her 'greetings' (*salutem, Her.*13.1) to her husband Protesilaus, her 'Haemonian hero' (*Haemonio uiro, Her.*13.2); while in *ex Ponto* ten of the letters have some variation of this formulaic opening greeting and the majority make use of some form of the word 'I send' (*mitto*). The majority of the single letters in *Heroides,* however, have no formulaic opening and few reveal either the writer's name or that of her addressee at the beginning of

[45] *Heroides* 13 is the most like Propertius 4.3 as they are both written by young wives to husbands away at war. Merklin, H., 'Arethusa und Laodamia', *Hermes*, 96, 461-94, 1968, has compared these two women but there is very little scholarship devoted to Propertius 4.3. Dee, J., 'Arethusa to Lycotas: Propertius 4.3', *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 104, 81-96, 1974, writes a general evaluation of Propertius 4.3; Janan, Micaela, *The Politics of Desire, Propertius IV*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2001, p. 4, writes on '…the social and political forces that shape the subject within Roman erotic poetry' using the psychoanalytic theory of Lacan and looks at Propertius 4.3 in Chapter 3, 53-69; Wyke, M., *The Roman Mistress,* Oxford, 2002, discusses the representation of women in Latin literature and while looking at the generic and cultural determinants of the elegiac women of Propertius, writes about Arethusa, 85-93; Fulkerson, L., '(Un)sympathetic Magic: A Study of Heroides 13', *American Journal of Philology*, 123, 61-87, 2002, writes on the use of erotic magic imagery to be found in Ovid's *Heroides* 13. There is no precise dating for *Heroides,* and the general consensus of opinion is that these letters are a development from an idea generated by Propertius 4.3 but there is no conclusive evidence as to which poem was written first. However, Ovid acknowledges Propertius as a writer of love elegies (*Tr.* 2.465) and as one of his group (*Tr.* 4.10.45-54) and his works show that as a poet he has a propensity to take an established idea or form and develop it in a new or innovative way. His *Amores* owe something to Propertius, Book 1, his *Fasti* to Propertius Book 4 but both may rest on a Callimachean model.

[46] The distinction between the 'writer' of the letter and the author of the poem is always blurred and adds interest even as it results in some degree of confusion. I look at this distinction (or lack of distinction) in Chapter Three below. The author of some of the *Heroides* is not in doubt, (evidence cited usually rests on Ovid's own work, *Amores* 2.18.19-26) and while much discussion has surrounded the rest, for the purposes of this work I treat all 21 letters as the work of Ovid. For an overview of the authenticity of the collection *Heroides,* see Knox, P., (ed) *Ovid: Heroides*, 1995, pp. 5-14. In my Chapter Three, I explore the blend of author and persona in the *Epistulae ex Ponto* at length.

the poem. In the double letters, some use a formulaic opening and some do not; Paris (*Her.*16) opens his letter in a formal way and the letters between Leander (*Her.*18) and Hero (*Her.*19) show a standard opening and reply formula while there is no formulaic opening in the letter of Helen (*Her.*17), Acontius (*Her.*20) and Cydippe (*Her.*21).[47] Most of the letters, however, mention the name of both the writer and the addressee early in the poem, sometimes using allusion or metaphorical language and this serves to indicate the poem's status as letters and the importance of the characters in the poem.[48]

When Propertius uses the word *littera* (4.3.5) it is used to mean the individual letters of Arethusa's handwriting but, as it is included in a reference to the act of writing and reading, it further indicates that this poem is a letter. Ovid also exploits the ambiguity inherent in the word in his *Heroides*: in the letter from Briseis, reference is made to the difficulty a barbarian has writing Greek 'letters' (*littera, Her.*3.1); Ariadne writes that the letters she writes 'falter' (*litteraque … labat, Her.*10.140); Hypermnestra writes that 'at this one point her writing fails' (*deficit hoc uno littera nostra loco, Her.*12.114) and Sappho expects her handwriting to be recognized, (*littera …./ cognita … Her.*15). In his later poems from exile, his *Epistulae ex Ponto,* Ovid also expects his handwriting to be recognized by his friend Macer when he asks, 'do you recognize the letters formed by my hand?' (*cognitane est nostra littera facta manu? Pont.* 2.10.4) so emphasizing the double

[47] The 'letter' *epistula* of Helen (*Her.*17.1) gives no name or greeting. Acontius (*Her.*20) uses no formulaic opening but requests his unnamed addressee to 'read through to the end' (*perlege! Her.*20.3) and Cydippe (*Her.*21) gives no standard reply but makes reference to her own silent reading, 'without a murmur' (*sine murmure, Her.*21.1)

[48] The addressee of *Heroides* 13 is referred to, not by name, but in relation to the writer, Laodamia, by allusion to his (and her) homeland and his status as her husband or hero, her 'Thessalian hero' (*Heamonio … uiro, Her.*13.2). See also Phaedra as 'the Cretan maid' in relation to Hippolytus, 'the hero whose mother was an Amazon' (*Her.*4.2); Canace, 'Aeolus' daughter' in relation to her brother (*Her.*11.5); Medea as 'Queen of Colchis' in relation to Jason 'the son of Aeson' (*Her.*12.1 and 16).

meaning of *littera* as both individual letters of the alphabet and the whole letter, the poem written by Ovid's hand.

Through verbal play on the words for 'blots' and 'tears' (*litura* and *lacrimis,* 4.3.4) and the word for 'letters of the alphabet' (*littera,* 4.3.5) Propertius emphasizes the physicality of the act of writing. In both Propertius and Ovid, the action of the writer has to be imagined, especially as we read a clean, printed text with no sign of the tears or bloodstains or the weak, trembling or dying hand described in the letters.[49] By stressing the writer's response to her physical situation (weeping, trembling, and fainting as well as writing a beautiful verse letter) both poets develop the character of the writer and allow the reader to sympathize with her plight. When Ovid finds himself in exile, his own letters also contain these same epistolary properties in order to make his plight more immediate and so more likely to elicit sympathy in his friends so they will appeal to the emperor on the poet's behalf.[50]

Both the letter of Propertius and that of Ovid, his *Heroides* 13, make use of a conversational style with reference to everyday events and to the feelings of the writer. Both letters accentuate the subjective point of view of the writer and a preoccupation with

[49] Presumably, in ancient times the reader's text was similarly clean and the audience at a poetry reading would have to depend on what they hear in the voice and see in the gestures of the reader to imagine the physical act of writing described by the heroine. See also Ovid, *Tr.*1.1.13-14; 3.1.15-16 where the personified letters are less than perfect and *Heroides,* 11.1 where Canace apologizes for the book stained by its mistress' blood. Ovid's Byblis, writing to her brother Caunus also mentions her trembling hand and describes how she stops and starts, changes what she has written and squeezes words in the margin so the letter serves as a commentary on her unresolved and hesitant situation. Byblis acknowledges that she over-estimated the power of a letter to persuade when it fails to do so and she wishes she had approached her brother in person (*Met.* 9.520ff).

[50] Farrell, J., 'Reading and writing the *Heroides*', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 98, 307-38, 1998, p. 338, draws a parallel between Ovid's letters of the *Heroides* and those written from exile and observes that the letters are a means to overcome not only distance but the silence of abandonment and exile. He sees the exiled Ovid '…writing as a response to an attempt to impose silence'.

self as the writer tries to communicate in letter form with her absent husband. Both letters point out the temporal and spatial distance which separates the writer and her addressee. Propertius' Arethusa positions herself in time by reference to her physical act of writing (and weeping) and the effect she imagines this will have on the future act of reading by her absent husband (4.3.1-6). She looks back to their recent wedding (4.3.11-16) and forward to the time she will be able to hang up his arms and write below them, 'a girl grateful for her husband's safety' (*saluo grata puella uiro.* 4.3.72). Ovid's Laodamia, describes how she fainted in her pain and misery when her new husband sailed away to war (*Her.*13.21-30), how she now has to be ordered to put on her royal robes (*Her.*13.35-6) and how she wonders when in the future they will lie together again (*Her.*13.115-122).

There are many similarities between these two bereft wives, both newly married, both have husbands away at war, and neither know what their future will be, or when or even if their husbands will return. Arethusa wants her husband back only if he is faithful (4.3.69-70) Laodamia wants hers back unharmed (*Her.*13.83-4) and both offer a purely subjective point of view when they write of love and war; as both see their husbands as lovers rather than soldiers. Arethusa writes of the 'delicate shoulders' (*teneros …. lacertos,* 3.4.23) and 'unwarlike hands (*imbellis manus,* 3.4.24) of her husband and Laodamia thinks her husband has no reason to fight, not like Menelaus who fights to regain his wife (*Her.*13.69) and selfishly suggests that 'others should go to war but may Protesilaus love' (*bella gerant alii, Protesilaus amet! Her.*13.84). Both girls long for the time when they can be together with their husbands again (although we, as external readers, know from literary sources that this is a vain hope for Laodamia: in Arethusa's case we have no such source of

knowledge)[51] and both exploit the letter form to add a subjective poignancy to their earnest desires.

As well as a temporal distance, each letter is written to overcome a physical or spatial distance which separates the writer and the addressee. In Propertius' poem the location of the addressee, Lycotas, is indicated by the place-name, 'Bactria' (*Bactra,* 4.3.7) and the letter writer, Arethusa, lists many other remote places where her husband has been posted before. Ovid's Laodamia also lists the fearful place names associated with the distant war to which her husband has gone. These place-names, with their accompanying descriptions, seem to be more like a poetic collection denoting 'foreign' or 'other' places rather than strict geographical locations.[52] In order to know these places Arethusa has had 'to learn from a map the painted worlds' (*cogor et e tabula pictos ediscere mundos,* 4.3.36)[53] in contrast to her well-known domestic task of weaving (*texitur,* 4.3.18) and honouring the

[51] Because Propertius' Arethusa and Lycotas cannot be identified as having mythical or literary origins, there is no external source of 'knowledge' of events before or after this letter. With Ovid's *Heroides,* there is an added tension and irony in the letters because most of the writers are literary figures and the outcome of their situation is already known by the external reader. Laodamia's husband, according to Homer, was first off the ship at Troy and the first killed (*Iliad* 2.698-702). As Kennedy, D.F., 'The Epistolary Mode and the First of Ovid's *Heroides*', *Classical Quarterly.* 34, 413-422, 1984, p. 421 writes: 'Within an epistolary context, deviation from an established source allows the reader to recognize and penetrate the subjectivity of the 'writers' viewpoint which is a central feature of the form'.

[52] cf. Catullus11.1-12 as Janan, M, *The Politics of Desire, Propertius IV,* 2001, pp. 56-7, observes. I suggest in my Chapter One, above, that Ovid's descriptions of place depend more on a traditional or literary view of 'otherness' than verifiable facts, in relation to his *Epistulae ex Ponto*. The descriptions used by writers after Herodotus such as Catullus, Virgil, Propertius and Ovid are remarkable similar; Libyan heat, Scythian cold, and arrow-bearing Parthians. These descriptions thus become a symbol for anything foreign.

[53] Janan, M., *The Politics of Desire, Propertius IV,* 2001, p. 68, writes about Propertius' verse letter in relation to isolation and distance from Rome. 'Arethusa's map and her letter, as symbols of dispersion and integration, together summarize the specific tensions that traverse the notion of *Romanitas* in the late Republic and early Empire. …. The letter and the map between them summarize *both* masculine and feminine epistemological perspectives on *Romanitas*: the letter's mobility metonymically represents the citizenry's increasing heterogeneity and geographic dispersion, that requires its representation by documents; the map, on the other hand, guides efforts to weave this heterogeneity into a Whole, both by directing the documents to Rome, and representing as a unity the territory Rome anchors'. See also Nicolet, Claude, *Space, Geography, and Politics in the Early Roman Empire,* Ann Arbor, 1991, pp. 189-207, who sees that the circulation of documents throughout recognizable topographical regions was necessary if administration was to remain centered in Rome.

household gods (4.3.53-58) whereas Laodamia's concern is not so much the physical place of war but the people who are taking part in the legend such as Paris, Helen, Hector and Menelaus (*Her.*13.51-78)[54] and the women of Troy (*Her.*13.137-148). Both wives refer, through place names or literary suggestion, to a world much greater than their static domestic location in order to demonstrate their own small part in the wider sphere inhabited by their husbands. The letter form is an attempt to bridge the distance between these two positions, the private and the public, in order to bring wife and husband closer together, if not physically, then at least in the imagination of the letter writer.

The verse letter of Propertius and Ovid's *Heroides* 13, each show the subjective position of the writer. Both poets portray the writers as wives who see themselves only in relation to their absent husbands. Both wives refer to their marriage; Arethusa by her bitter recollection of ill-omened marriage rites (4.3.11-16) and Laodamia by swearing on her wedding torches (*Her.*13.159-160). Reference is made by both to the marriage bed; Arethusa tells how her present sleeplessness is brought on by her husband's absence in bed (4.3.29-32) and how she now shares it with the dog (4.3.55-6), while Laodamia relates how she imagines her husband in her dreams (*Her.*13.107-122) and how she has had a lifelike waxen image made of him, which she embraces and to which she speaks and complains (*Her.*13.151-8). Both girls write that they would go to war to be with their husbands: Arethusa, if it is allowed (4.3.43-48) and Laodamia, if she is called (*Her.*13.163-164). They both see themselves, their dress and hair, in relation to pleasing their husbands: while they are alone neither girl sees a need to dress in purple (*purpura,* 4.3.51; *murice,*

[54] There is some difficulty with the text here, but these names are mentioned or implied in lines not counted as spurious. Showerman, Grant, (tr) *Ovid. Heroides and Amores*, London, 1914, p. 162.

*Her.*13.37), and Ovid's Laodamia expands on this to draw a comparison between her hair and dress and her husband's helmet and hard armour (*Her.*13.39-40). It is these everyday matters, conventions of the letter form, which serve to deepen and fill out the character of each writer. Laodamia is revealed as being more superstitious than the practical, cloak-weaving Arethusa but both are shown as lonely and apprehensive, resorting to propitiation and prayer because they are powerless to change their situation.[55]

The letter writer can never know how the addressee fares because of the physical and temporal distance which separates them. This 'unknowing' leads to a dependence on imagination and prayers, prophesies, omens and dreams.[56] The poem of Propertius and many of those of Ovid's *Heroides* show such dependence in the personalities of their various writers. Both Arethusa (4.3.53-58) and Laodamia (*Her.*13.112) make offerings at altars and offer up prayers for the safety of their respective husbands and both girls show that they are moved by portents and omens when they refer to wine being sprinkled on flame (4.3.59-60 and *Her.*13.113-4).[57] Laodamia seems more superstitious than Arethusa as she refers many more times to omens; she recalls Protesilaus tripping as he went out the door (*Her.*13.87-8) and chides herself for the omen of calling him back from war (*Her.*13.135) and prays to the gods that the sinister omen be kept away from her (*di,*

[55] Wyke, M., *The Roman Mistress*, 2002, pp. 85-93, draws a comparison between Lucretia and Arethusa to show them as loyal wives matching an ideal of Roman womanhood. She also sees the letter form with its first person narrator, giving voice, with the viewpoint of an elegiac poet, to a devaluation of war. Further she sees Propertius' Arethusa as a fictional Roman matron constructed to define the author's poetic design in his fourth book.

[56] In the *Epistulae ex Ponto,* Ovid as letter-writer in exile also recounts a dream (*Pont.* 3.3). I look at how the dream sequence and the subject of the dream narrative complicate our perception of author and persona in Chapter Three.

[57] When Hero writes to Leander she also mentions a spluttering lamp and drops being sprinkled onto it to ensure a good omen (*Her.*19.151).

*precor, a nobis omen remouete sinistrum, Her.*13.49).[58] Such outpourings of emotion are typical of the letter form, employed to suggest spontaneity, truthfulness and openness and are often associated with this direct and personal means of communication. It is markers such as these in Propertius 4.3, throughout Ovid's *Heroides* and in his *Epistulae ex Ponto*, which indicate that these elegies are primarily of the epistolary genre.[59]

From our perspective these constructed letters from fictional heroines prefigure Ovid's own letters from exile and strangely foreshadow his own situation, abandoned (exiled) on the edge of the world far from the city and people he loved. Rosenmeyer (1997) sees Ovid's 'choice of the letter form for the exile poems as not only an allusion to, but also an authorial statement of identification - on some level - with his earlier epistolary work, the *Heroides*'.[60] This view reinforces the idea that Ovid is using his 'known' work and the familiar form of the letter, to make it easier for his friends to understand what he writes about when he describes his new and unfamiliar experience of exile in a letter.

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[58] Fulkerson, L., '(Un)sympathetic Magic: A Study of Heroides 13', 2002, pp. 83-4, explores the use of erotic magic imagery in Ovid's *Heroides* 13 and links the writing of a poem and the construction of a wax image by Laodamia to the death of her husband. Fulkerson writes: '… *Heroides* 13 shows a Laodamia who, attempting merely to assuage her loneliness, unwittingly writes her husband's death as well as her own through her misuse of wax and of *carmina*…. Using a subtext of magic and superstition, he [Ovid] has turned a story about love lasting beyond death into an example of the dangers of misreading'. Ovid refers to tripping as a bad omen at the opening of a poem berating his writing tablets for carrying a negative message (*Amores* 1.12.3-4). See also that tripping on the threshold combined with an owl's hooting bodes ill for Myrrha embarking on an incestuous love affair (*Met.*10.450) and the poet's own foot touches the threshold three times as he is leaving to go into exile (*Tr.* 1.3.55-6).

[59] Conte, G.B., 'Empirical and Theoretical approaches to Literary Genre', K. Galinsky ed., *The Interpretation of Roman Poetry: Empiricism or Hermeneutics*, Frankfurt am Main, 1992, p. 107, writes that genre is an association of content and form, a total system of structural relations and that Ovid seemed to be 'interested in the relative nature of genres…' He puts it succinctly when he writes, 'The development of Roman poetry towards a canon of genres provokes a tension that is so strong that it raises expectations around "unoccupied" spaces, *blanks* created and delimited at the borders of already fulfilled genres. Thus, for example, Ovid notices in some of Propertius' elegiac experiments the potential for an unoccupied genre (Ovid actually calls it *opus*, "specific form of poetic creation"): and his *Heroides* are written to fill up just this generic space, which is still free, *ignotum aliis* according to Ovid's well known definition, (*Ars Amat.* 3.346)'. p. 113.

[60] Rosenmeyer, P.A., 'Ovid's *Heroides* and *Tristia*: Voices from Exile', 1997, p. 29.

Whether the letters in the *Epistulae ex Ponto* are another experiment with a literary form like the *Heroides* or arise as a practical response to the separation and distance of exile, they have the effect, through both form and content, of engaging in an immediate and personal way with the reader. The poet may have used the form to signal a more personal and formal means of soliciting aid from his friends in response to the passing of time and the lack of reaction to his previously unaddressed poems.

Since the poet himself draws our attention to the letter form of his poems at the beginning of the *Epistulae ex Ponto* (*Pont.* 1.1.17-18) I argue that this must alert us to the possibility that the form should influence our understanding of these poems. Janet Altman although writing mainly on the French epistolary novel, defines the term epistolarity as 'the use of a letter's formal properties to create meaning' and observes that:

> … the basic formal and functional characteristics of the letter, far from being merely ornamental, significantly influence the way meaning is consciously and unconsciously constructed by writers and readers of epistolary works... [61]

These formal properties or signposts for an epistle are based on the style suitable for a letter suggested by Demetrius and modern theorists agree that some or all of these features help to identify the epistolarity of any given text.[62] Rosenmeyer writes that by reading a

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[61] Altman, J. G., *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form*, Columbus, 1982, p. 4, The clear and comprehensive observations Altman makes about characteristics of the letter in connection with the epistolary novel can be made also about the epistolary features in Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto.*

[62] Scholars have long recognized that the letter form is a distinct style of writing and there has been much discussion on genre and gender with regard to the epistolary novel and feminist criticism. Allen, W., 'Horace's First Book of *Epistles* as Letters', 1972, writing on Horace's *Epistles* shows that in ancient times the letter was already a traditional literary form. Altman, J. G., *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form*, 1982, writing on the French epistolary novel identifies clearly the structures common to letters and shows how epistolarity influences our understanding of a text. Kauffman, L.S., *Discourses of Desire: Gender, Genre, and Epistolary Fictions*, Ithaca, 1986, looks at the love letter as a genre, in a broad sweep from Ovid's *Heroides* to *The Three Marias: New Portuguese Letters* (1972). She follows this, see Kauffman, L.S., *Special Delivery: Epistolary Modes in Modern Fiction*, Chicago, 1992, with a study limited to letter novels from 1923 to 1986 and includes a clear analysis of the 'novelised' theoretical works of Barthes, Roland, *A Lover's*

text 'through the lens of epistolarity [we explore] how the letter … affects … our own response as external readers'.[63] Most recently Kennedy (2002), in his excellent overview of Ovidian scholarship and epistolarity, draws attention to a change in reader response when he writes;

> The dramatic reversal in critical estimates of the *Heroides* in the past generation or so arises not simply from a closer attention to epistolary form but also a heightened awareness of, and investment in, the distinctive aspects of letter writing as a discursive mode, as a model of communication and as a subject position.[64]

To apply Kennedy's 'heightened awareness' and Rosenmeyer's 'lens of epistolarity' to the last letters Ovid wrote, his *Epistulae ex Ponto*, is particularly rewarding. The letter form makes us take note of the many layers of meaning created by both the writer's voice and the addressee's presence in each verse. This form adds a more personal and intimate appeal to his poems not found in his earlier *Tristia*, which is similar in content but less epistolary in style. By naming his well known Roman friends the poet encourages us to imagine not only his fate as a poet in exile but also the reception of his verse epistles in Rome. It will come as no surprise that many of the poems in the *Epistulae ex Ponto* have an unusual combination of the signposts for a letter as variation and innovation have always been a part of the poet's style. The formal characteristics of a letter are prominent in the last poems from exile and Ovid both adheres to and departs from them in order to emphasize

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Discourse, Fragments, New York, 1978, and Derrida, J., *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, A. Bass, (tr.) Chicago, 1987.

[63] Rosenmeyer, P.A., 'Love Letters in Callimachus, Ovid and Aristaenetus or the Sad Fate of the Mailorder Bride', *Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici*, 36, 9-31, 1996, p. 9.

[64] Kennedy, D.F., 'Epistolarity: The *Heroides*', 2002, pp. 219-220. He looks at the debate over Ovid's claim to innovation regarding his *Heroides* as a new form of epistolary lament and writes of a change from the negative view of letters by scholars in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when they were seen as soliloquies or '*suasoriae* in verse' and linked with common rhetorical school exercises, to a more positive view in recent years through an appreciation of the literary merit of epistolary texts.

his dislocation and distance from Rome and to make his appeal for relocation more persuasive.

A significant example of the epistolary genre is the second letter in the *Epistulae ex Ponto*, addressed to Fabius Maximus, *ex Ponto* 1.2.

> Maxime, qui tanti mensuram nominis inples
> et geminas animi nobilitate genus,
> qui nasci ut posses, quamuis cecidere trecenti,
> non omnis Fabios abstulit una dies,
> forsitan haec a quo mittatur epistula quaeras,
> quisque loquar tecum certior esse uelis.
> ei mihi! quid faciam? vereor ne nomine lecto
> durus et auersa cetera mente legas! (*Pont*. 1.2.1-8)

> Maximus, you who fill up the measure of so great a name and double your high origin through nobility of soul, who, so that you could be born, although 300 were cut down, one day did not carry away all the Fabii. Perhaps you ask from whom this letter is sent and you wish to be told who shall speak with you? Ah me! What should I do? I fear, lest on reading the name, you will become pitiless and read the rest with a hostile mind.

The name of the addressee is prominent, both by position (it is the first word in the poem) and case (vocative) and the specificity of the name and family of the addressee is clearly indicated (1-4). The first lines are an impressive variation on naming the addressee of the letter and are dense with allusion to the status of Ovid's friend and patron, Paullus Fabius Maximus, to the history of that elite family, to the history of Rome and also obliquely to his own work, his *Fasti*, where he tells the story of the Fabii at greater length.[65] As in most letters, where the opening serves to make the reader well disposed and attentive, the poet

[65] As told by Livy, the story of the Fabii illustrates the loyalty of one family to the early Republic, when 300 Fabii died defending Rome against the Etruscans about 477 B.C. Only one boy escaped, being under the age to fight and so preserved the Fabii, who traced their lineage to Heracles. Livy 2.50. Ovid tells the story at *Fasti* 2.195ff and his account is similar to that of Livy but ends with a reference to another famous ancestor, one Quintus Fabius Maximus known as the 'delayer' who saved Rome (c209B.C.) in the war with Hannibal. Livy writes that Quintus Fabius Maximus (or his grandson) earned the name 'Maximus' and quotes Ennius as the source for the appellation 'delayer'. Livy 30.26. Foster, B.O., (tr) *Livy, Books XXI-XXII*, Cambridge, Mass., 1969.

here in the first few lines, with not so subtle flattery, courts the good will of the reader Fabius Maximus and signals the opening of a letter.[66]

Although the word describing the form is evident (*epistula*, *Pont.* 1.2.5) and the word to show it is 'being sent' (*mittatur*, *Pont.* 1.2.5)[67] this is no formulaic opening greeting as the expected name of the writer is withheld. The writer does not mention himself by name in this letter (he says that he hesitates to write it for fear the name will adversely influence his reader) but the very omission draws attention to his name and also to the depth of meaning and influence which can be attributed to the epistolary opening formula of a letter. The focus shifts immediately away from the addressee, Maximus, the 'you' in 'you fill up' (*imples*, *Pont.* 1.2.1) and 'you wish' (*uelis*, *Pont*. 1.2.6) to the writer as if he is speaking, 'Ah me! What should I do?' (*ei mihi! quid faciam? Pont*. 1.2.7).

By writing the imagined response on reading his poem, the poet emphasizes the letter form and the distance it needs to negotiate between the writer and the reader. The first eight lines are balanced, the 'name' (*nominis, Pont.* 1.2.I) of the addressee, Maximus (lines 1-4) and the 'name' (*nomine*, *Pont.* 1.2.8) of the writer (lines 5-8) are both equally important, and this shows that in the letter form both the writer and the reader are written into the text. Altman writes of the assumed and obvious importance of the addressee to every epistolary

[66] Davisson, M.H.T., 'The Functions of Openings in Ovid's Exile Epistles', 1988, p. 17

[67] Davisson, M.H.T., 'The Functions of Openings in Ovid's Exile Epistles', 1988, p. 18, draws attention to the conventional openings of letters, comparing the Ciceronian "M. Cicero *alicui salutem dicit*" with ten of the *Epistulae ex Ponto* which begin with some variation on "*Naso alicui salutem mittit*" and writes that 'the variety and ingenuity of Ovid's openings help refute the criticism which dismisses the exile poetry as monotonous and uninventive'.

situation, the addressee 'whose presence alone distinguishes the letter from other first-person forms'. [68]

The power of speech is indicated throughout the poem, especially with reference to the eloquent tongue of Fabius Maximus.[69]

> suscipe, Romanae facundia, Maxime, linguae
> difficilis causae mite patrocinium.
> est mala, confiteor, sed te bona fiet agente:
> lenia pro misera fac modo uerba fuga. (*Pont.* 1.2.67-70)
>
> Undertake, Maximus, eloquence of Roman tongue, the mild pleading of a difficult case. It is bad, I confess, but it will become good if you make it, just make some soothing words for a wretched exile.

The poet repeats the idea that words can have a beneficial effect on their hearer later in this poem when he again asks his friend to speak on his behalf.

> Caesaris haec animum poterant audita mouere,
> Maxime, mouissent si tamen ante tuum.
> vox, precor, Augustas pro me tua molliat aures,
> auxilio trepidis quae solet esse reis,
> adsuetaque tibi doctae dulcedine linguae
> aequandi superis pectora flecte uiri. (*Pont.* 1.2.113-118)
>
> These rumours may be able to move the heart of Caesar, Maximus, if only they had moved yours before. Let your voice, which is in the habit of helping frightened defendants, soften on my behalf I pray, the ears of Augustus, and with customary sweetness of your learned tongue, bend the heart of a man comparable to the gods.

In this way the poet depicts himself as both one who speaks and one who writes so that the addressee can both hear and read what is sent as a letter. This letter, by frequent use of words for speaking, 'you ask' (*quaeras*, *Pont.* 1.2.5) 'to be told' (*certior esse*, *Pont.* 1.2.6)

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[68] Altman, J. G., *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form*, 1982, p. 118-122. She points out that the letter form supposes a speaker/writer (*I*) and a hearer/reader, (*you*) and that the addressee plays a role in the narrative.

[69] An eloquent tongue is a prized attribute. See, *A. A.* 2.123, which refers to Ulysses; *Tr.* 3.5.29 and 4.4.5 refers to faithful friends; and the eloquence of Messalinus, *Pont.* 2.2.51; and Cotta Maximus, *Pont.* 2.3.75 is also mentioned. Horace also refers to the eloquence of Fabius Maximus in his *Carmina* 4.1.13 and 35. For the significance of rhetoric, eloquence and persuasive speaking in Roman society see Dominik, W. J. (ed) *Roman Eloquence*, London and New York, 1997 and for Ovid's eloquence, see Stapleton, M.L., *Harmful Eloquence*: Ovid's *Amores* from Antiquity to Shakespeare, Ann Arbour, 1996.

'shall speak' (*loquar, Pont.* 1.2.6) conforms to the traditional style for a letter as a substitute for conversation (although not an imitation of dialogue). Conversation even features in his dreams and the poet writes, in this letter to Fabius Maximus, that to dream of speaking with him, his other friends and his wife, makes his waking life in exile even harder to bear (*Pont.* 1.2.47-51).[70] These references to writing as a substitute for conversation, and to reading, 'on reading' (*lecto, Pont.* 1.2.7) and 'you will read' (*legas, Pont.* 1.2.8), are conventions of the letter form.[71] The poet uses a similar convention of the genre, that of directing the letter to the specific interest of the intended reader, when he writes that Fabius Maximus is an eloquent orator who can speak well on behalf of clients (*Pont.* 1.2.67-70 and 113-118).[72]

There is, however, more emphasis on the writer's feelings and interests than on those of his addressee. The epistolary subject of the writer's health and state of mind is prominent in *ex Ponto* 1.2 and include feelings of sadness, fear and isolation caused by his distant location. The importance to the poet of his Roman citizenship, his comfortable homeland and especially his ongoing fame and popularity, cannot be understated. His feelings and fears about the loss of them run through all his poems from exile, both *Tristia* and the *Epistulae*

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[70] In *ex Ponto* 3.3 Ovid writes to Fabius Maximus describing how he speaks one night with a disheveled dream vision of Cupid (*Amor Pont.* 3.3.13) defending his poetry and asking that an answer be given to explain his exile. I look at this poem in relation to the poet and his persona in Chapter Three, pp. 112-117.

[71] The poet makes reference to the necessity, through exile, of substituting written words for spoken as; 'if to write is not permitted, I shall be dumb' (*et, si non liceat scribere, mutus ero, Pont.* 2.6.4). I look closely at this poem in Chapter Four with reference to the way the written word must substitute for the spoken voice because the poet is exiled so far from his audience in Rome, pp 126ff. See also Farrell, J., 'Reading and writing the *Heroides*', 1998 whose discussion on speech and silence could be applied to the work of the poet in exile.

[72] Syme, R., *History in Ovid*, 1978, p. 142, writes of Fabius Maximus: 'Eloquent testimony declares him endowed with manifold social gifts, a patron of poets, an orator,' and quotes Horace *Odes* IV.1.14 and *ex Ponto* 1.2.115f. Other letters of Ovid also reveal the interest of their intended readers: Brutus as poet and editor (*Pont.* 1.1.3-4; 3.9.52-3; 4.6.18); King Cotys as poet (*Pont.* 2.9.49-50); Severus as a great poet (*Pont.* 4.2). See Syme, R., *History in Ovid*, 1978, p. 72, 82 and throughout.

ex Ponto. The epistle can be only written from one perspective, that of the writer: it is subjectively writer-centred. A letter reveals more of the character and feelings of the writer than other styles and this is shown in the couplet:

> hostibus in mediis interque pericula uersor,
> tamquam cum patria pax sit adempta mihi. (*Pont* 1.2.14-15)
>
> I live in the middle of enemies and among perils, as if peace with my fatherland has been taken away from me.

The alliteration of the '*p*' sound adds a heavy beat and emphasizes pain and sorrow by reminding us of a similar alliteration in the words of mourning, 'to beat one's breast' (*pectora plangi*).[73] The alliteration also focuses attention on the two nouns, 'fatherland' (*patria*) and 'peace' (*pax*), one a significant place, Rome, the other an abstract concept, peace, which hang on the verb (*adempta*). Ovid has used almost the same words in the same order previously, (*Tr.* 2.202)[74] in a poem addressed to Augustus. Repetition such as this shows the importance of the terms to the poet, his concern about his place of exile, the distance from his homeland and his fear of the danger of war.[75] The poet uses the emotionally charged *adempta*, which stresses the subjectivity of the writer, from whom peace and homeland have been taken.[76] The word makes this couplet an emphatic appeal for sympathy. Elsewhere the poet uses the word of his friend Celsus in its customary

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[73] Ilia beats her breast in sorrow just before her death (*Am*,3.6.58) and other beaten breasts include those of Ariadne (*Her.* 10.145), Canace (*Her*. 11.91), Sappho (*Her*. 15.113), Hecuba (*Met.* 13.491) and Demeter (*Fasti* 4.454-5). The poet facetiously asks birds to beat their breasts in sorrow (*Am,* 2.6.3) and describes the transformation of the daughter of Coroneus into a crow, while beating her breast, (*Met.* 2.584-5). Page, T. E. (tr) *Horace, Odes.* London, 1956, p. 147, draws attention to Horace's alliteration (*Odes,* 1.4.13) of the 'p' sound for 'reverberating emphasis … as it was customary for a visitor to kick at the door especially if impatient'.

[74] 'That peace, together with my fatherland, should not be taken away from me' (*ne sit cum patria pax quoque dempta mihi, Tr.* 2.202). The words *patria* and *pax* are significant in Augustus' Rome with the dedication of *Ara Pacis* in 9 B.C. on his return from Spain and Gaul. (*Fasti* 1.709) and title *Pater Patriae* adopted in 2 B.C. by Augustus (*Fasti* 2.127-30).

[75] A similar construction, three nouns, 'cold' (*frigore*) and 'arrows' (*sagittis*) and 'fate' (*fato*) hanging on one verb 'fighting' (*pugnantem*) is also used to emphasize the poet's primary concerns, the cold, war and his fate or punishment, (*Pont.* 1.2.25-26). One or more of these concerns appear in almost all of Ovid's exile poems.

[76] The word has emotional significance as it is commonly used of bereavement, see note 77 below.

meaning of being 'taken away by death'.[77] He equates the word with death when he uses it of himself, to mean 'taken away' or 'exiled' as a way of accentuating the impact relegation has; he may as well be dead as live so far from home, friends and family.[78] The word also stresses the passive role the poet is forced into by exile; he is *adempta* by forces beyond his control. He highlights the sadness and misery he suffers in order to stir sympathy in his reader. Concern with self is evident in the use of the first person verbs and is especially obvious with the repetition of 'I, I am he' (*ille ego sum, Pont.* 1.2.33, 34). With this desperate cry for the recognition of a suffering man, the poet points out that his is not the kind of suffering that can be rendered unfeeling by any legendary transformation like that of the grieving Niobe or Phaethon's mourning sisters.[79] His suffering is greater than a human should have to bear and he increases this human element as he equates his suffering with that of the mythical Tityus.[80]

> sic inconsumptum Tityi semperque renascens
> non perit, ut possit saepe perire, iecur. (*Pont.* 1.2.39-40)
>
> Thus the liver of Tityus, being consumed and always made new, does not perish so that it can perish frequently.

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[77] This word *ademptus* is often used to mean 'taken away by death' of a loved one and to indicate mourning and lamentation. This couplet has clear echoes of Catullus 101, a well known mourning poem as well as Catullus 68.20, 68b.92, 93 and *Pont.* 1.9.41. Ovid uses the word in this way when he writes of the sadness of his heroines: Deianera mourning for her brother taken from by death (*Her.* 9.166); Sappho mourning like a mother whose son is taken by death (*Her.* 15.115); the sadness of Ceyx for a brother lost (*Met.* 11.273); but at *Fasti* 4.852, a note of irony is sounded when Catullus' words are voiced by Romulus at his brother's death (or was it murder?).

[78] a*dimo, ademptum, OLD*, § s.v. 8. Ovid laments his state of exile: *Tr.* 1.1.27; 3.10.1; 4.4.45; 4.10.79 and *Pont*. 4.6.49. The poet equates his place of exile with death; see my Chapter One, p. 40.

[79] This could also be seen as a reference to his own earlier work, *Metamorphoses*, where he tells the stories of great sorrow causing Niobe to change into a rock, *Met* 6.146 - 287, Tr. 5.1.57; 5.12.8, and Phaethon's sisters to turn into poplar trees, *Met.* 2.370-374. Ovid compares himself with mythical characters to accentuate the difference between his experience and fiction (see my Chapter One, p. 33, n. 42) and serves to blur the distinction between the 'suffering exile' persona and the author. See my Chapter Three.

[80] See also *Met*. 4.457 and *Amores* 3.12.25 for reference to Tityus.

In this strong couplet (*Pont.* 1.2.39-40) the poet illustrates the impossibility of his situation by using the paradox of Tityus' imperishable liver, emphasized by the position of the main noun as the last word of the pentameter, alliteration of 's' and 'p' sounds and reinforced by polyptoton of the word 'perish' (*pereo*). His subjective point of view is evident again when he repeats, 'I am he' (*ille ego, Pont*. 1.2.131, 136), this time to reinforce the idea that he is still the same man and friend as he was before exile. This emphasis is used to add weight to the poet's appeal to the obligation and duty of friendship that should not be weakened by the distance or absence caused by exile from Rome.

Appeals, not just for sympathy, but also for action by the reader on behalf of the writer, occur throughout the letter and the main reference to the reader is as one who can plead with the emperor for a changed place of exile. The poet's repeated appeals are in accordance with the traditional use of a letter and are the result of his wretched situation in exile and his dependence on the status and skill of the influential friend he addresses.[81] The absent reader shapes the content of the letter by being written into the text, both by name and by reference to mutual friends, family, interests and spheres of influence. The letter form assumes a reply and by making his later poems in the form of letters the poet amplifies this response to rouse the addressee to action on his behalf.

The letter is always a means of communication between two people separated in place and time and as such has two meanings, one for the writer and one for the reader. This inherent duality is emphasized in *ex Ponto* 1.2 by the double use of the verb 'doubling' (*geminas,*

[81] The poet's appeal to the skill of Fabius Maximus as an eloquent speaker is voiced at *Pont.* 1.2.67-70, 102 and 115-119. (see also *Tr.* 1.2.26) The poet stresses the obligations of friendship as well as appealing to the status, through kinship links with the imperial family, of Fabius Maximus, *Pont.* 1.2.127-150.

Pont. 1.2.2),[82] and 'they double' (*geminent*, *Pont.* 1.2.15). The word refers in the first instance to the repeated fame of the addressee and in the latter to the poisoning of arrows to augment their deadly power and can be seen to emphasize the double-ness at the heart of the letter form.

Figuratively the poet 'doubles' when he appeals to friendship (always between two) when he refers to a wedding (between two) and when he draws attention to himself as the writer and Maximus as the reader of the letter. Grammatically the poet 'doubles' when he uses one word in different constructions for emphasis and in this letter, such pairs often occur in the one line where a repetition of consonants also increases their significance.[83] The ability of the proposed reader to understand the place and time of the writer is enhanced by the linguistic skill of the poet and his choice of the letter form. Behind any letter is the urge to communicate in a meaningful way over distance and the poet's letter is an attempt to sustain contact, especially during the separation of exile. In Ovid's words, his situation in exile is always described in terms of two places, Tomis and Rome, and two people, himself and the emperor, the punished and the one who punishes. The letter is double-layered and has embedded an acceptance of distance and the dichotomy of space and time, from 'here' where the writer is now, to 'there' where the writer is no longer and where the recipient will read the letter at a later time.

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[82] *gemino*, *OLD*, § s.v. 3, to do twice or repeat. Ovid uses it with the same meaning of doubling honour at *Pont*. 3.4.99. It often signals ambiguity: stressing the double or repetitive nature of anybody or anything draws attention to other points of view, the double meaning inherent in some verbs is dependent on who is doing what to whom.

[83] See: serious punishment made more serious, g*rauiore, grauiora* (*Pont*. 1.2.11-12); winter with winter, *hiemi*, *hiems* (*Pont*. 1.2.24)*;* it does not perish in order to perish *perit, perire*, (*Pont*. 1.2.40); I pray for death, I pray to avert death, *precor mortem*, *mortem deprecor* (*Pont*. 1.2.57); Conquered to spare the conquered *uicit, uictis*, (*Pont*. 1.2.123); who controls much with fear of punishment, little with punishment itself, *poena, poenae* (*Pont*. 1.2.125). Alliteration alerts us to the grammatical form and reinforces the ambiguity of the terms.

Modern epistolary theory sees the writer attempting to overcome the barrier of distance between the sender and the absent recipient. There is both an acceptance of the distance and an urge to eliminate it in the letter. Kennedy (2002) writes:

> Epistolary discourse must manipulate both space and time in order to overcome these barriers so as to make communication relevant rather than anachronistic at the moment when the letter is read.[84]

As Altman neatly puts it, '[e]pistolary discourse is the language of the pivotal yet impossible present'. [85] The presence of the recipient in the letter is an attempt to overcome absence and the difficulty of this is reflected in the strain put on the 'presence' and the present tense of the writer.[86] In the mind of the reader, either the imagined recipient or an external reader as we are now, the present tense of the writer has to be constantly adjusted. There is always a time lag in a letter from the 'now' of the writer to the future tense of the imagined act of reading. The writer is always 'bound in a present preoccupied with the future'.[87] As well as the intimate nature of the letter form, or what each letter might mean personally to its named recipient, there is also often an acknowledgement of a public response to the letter, both through their circulation as verse and through the 'internally portrayed collector-publisher figure.'[88] We know that each of Ovid's letters is intended to

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[84] Kennedy, D.F., 'Epistolarity: The *Heroides*', 2002, p. 221.
[85] Altman, J. G., *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form*, 1982, p. 129
[86] See also and at length Hardie, Philip, *Ovid's Poetics of Illusion*, Cambridge, 2002, Chapter 9, 283-325.
[87] Altman, J. G., *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form*, 1982, p. 124
[88] Altman, J. G., *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form*, 1982, p. 91, notes: '…the epistolary reader is empowered to intervene, to correct style, to give shape to the story, often to become an agent or narrator in his own right'. Altman goes on to say, p. 107, that: 'The internal reader persona frequently loses his or her specificity to coincide with the external reader who could be anyone'. Kennedy, D.F., 'Epistolarity: The *Heroides*', 2002, describes the 'external' reader as one who is outside the 'intended' or contemporary audience. I would add that any reader other than the named recipient is an 'external' reader. Ovid's exile letters have enjoyed varying degrees of popularity over the centuries, admirably summarized by Williams, G., 'Ovid's Exile Poetry: Worlds Apart', *Brill's Companion to Ovid*, B.W. Boyd, (ed.) Leiden, 337-381, 2002(a), p. 338, and Holzberg, N., *Ovid, The Poet and his Work*, Ithaca and London, 1998, pp.1-4.

be available to a wider audience through collection and publication in book of poems, as he writes at the end of book 3 in the *Epistulae ex Ponto*:

> nec liber ut fieret, sed uti sua cuique daretur
> littera, propositum curaque nostra fuit.
> postmodo conlectas utcumque sine ordine iunxi:
> hoc opus electum ne mihi forte putes. (*Pont*. 3.9.51-54)
>
> But that a letter should be sent to each, not a book made, was our purpose and care. Later, I collected them and joined them together without order, lest perchance, you think this work to have been selected.

The author's intention is made clear; he admits that the letter is his chosen form of writing for these last poems, but immediately weakens this claim when he tells of collecting them, presumably for publication. Because the poems are in the form of personal letters, access to the text is essentially voyeuristic; the public audience or reader observes the poet's private correspondence with his friends. Because the poet has drawn attention to the letter form, I argue that the epistolarity of his *Epistulae ex Ponto* is important and can be seen as a response to his distance from Rome. Although the author's intention is forever unknown and his control over the reception of his work is out of his hands, in the following chapter I show how the poet uses the name, Naso, with increased frequency in these letters, to focus our awareness on the writer or author.[89]

[89] Hinds, S., *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of appropriation in Roman poetry*, Cambridge, 1998, p. 144, writes of '…that famous (and undeniable) *impasse*, the ultimate unknowability of the poet's intention'. He also writes, p. 46, that the 'possibilities for the non-inert reading of a commonplace adds its own challenge to the terms of a tidy 'philological contract' between the author and reader'.

Chapter Three

The Concept of the Literary or Poetic persona in Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto*.

I have argued (Chapter Two) that the choice of the letter form for the poems in Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto* makes them more personal and persuasive and that the letter, with its subjective point of view and insistence on first-hand experience (Chapter One) makes an intimate appeal for understanding from its writer to its recipient. In this chapter, I look closely at how the writer is presented or constructed in these letters. It is universally accepted, at least on a theoretical level, that there is a difference between the writer or author and the speaking voice or persona in literature and much has been written on the subject. I add to the discussion as I look at how the letter form and an increased use of names affects our perception of the persona in Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto.*

Throughout these letters the grammatical first-person singular (or the poetic plural) is used and the writer is referred to by name, 'Naso', on many occasions.[1] 'Naso' is understood to be author of the letters and the same poet and author as is found named in earlier poems, the *Amores*, *Ars Amatoria*, *Remedia Amoris*, *Fasti* and *Tristia*. Although the poet claims in *Tristia,* that there is a difference between his life and the sentiments voiced in his earlier poems, I argue that the distinction between Ovid or 'Naso' and the voice of the narrator in the exile letters is hopelessly blurred, not least because of the name used, and in this section I explore how the concept of the literary or poetic persona applies to Ovid's poetry, especially focusing on the *Epistulae ex Ponto*. In these last poems from exile, the

[1] The name occurs most frequently in *Epistulae ex Ponto* (26 times in 46 poems) and is found frequently in *Tristia* (13 times in 45 poems). It is also found in *Fasti* 5.377; *Remedia Amoris* 71, 72, 558; *Ars Amatoria* 2.744, 3.812; and *Amores* 1.ep.1, 1.11.27, 2.1.2, 2.13.25.

difference between the writer and the narrative voice or persona is reduced because the poet can now only identify himself by means of 'letters in place of spoken words' (*littera pro uerbis, Pont.* 1.7.1) using the written word to communicate through his letters.

The term persona as we use it today (from the Latin *persona* meaning the mask or character in a play) refers to a literary construct, a voice or character in a poem or story. In order to maintain a distinction from the author of the poem or story, in modern times it has become almost a convention to refer to Ovid as 'the lover', 'the teacher' or 'the exile'. Modern critical theory, with its varying emphasis on the author, the text, or the reader, accepts a clear separation between the writer and his or her persona but I contend, with others, that there is always some slippage. This problem has been noted, especially with regard to the personal poetry of Augustan elegists. Duncan Kennedy writes:

> In elegy the lover-narrator uses the first person pronoun, refers to himself on occasion as 'Propertius', 'Tibullus' or 'Ovid' and describes himself as a poet. Because neither their contemporaries nor we have any reason to doubt the existence of authors bearing those names, who wrote these texts, there is an almost irresistible tendency to assimilate the author to the lover in the text, to read the poems as confessional…[2]

Many scholars have also engaged with the persona debate while discussing 'authorial intention' or the poet's attitude toward Augustus as revealed in poetry.[3] A tacit acceptance that the author uses an elegiac persona as protection from censure often underlies analysis of whether elegy is pro- or anti- Augustan.[4] From the premise that the mistress in elegy

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[2] Kennedy, D.F., *The Arts of Love*, Cambridge, 1993, p. 84.

[3] Kennedy, D.F., ''Augustan' and 'Anti-Augustan': Reflections on Terms of Reference', *Roman Poetry and Propaganda in the Age of Augustus*, A. Powell, (ed) Bristol, 26-58, 1992; Davis, P.J., 'Instructing the Emperor: Ovid *Tristia* 2', *Latomus*, 58, 799-809, 1999(a); Gale, M.R., 'Propertius 2.7: *Militia Amoris* and the Ironies of Elegy', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 87, 77-91, 1997 and Cairns, Francis, 'Self-Imitation Within a Generic Framework: Ovid, *Amores* 2.9 and 3.11 and the *renuntiatio amoris*', *Creative Imitation and Latin Literature*, (eds) D. West, and T. Woodman, Cambridge, 1979, Claassen J-M., '*Exsul ludens*: Ovid's exilic word games', *Classical Bulletin*, 75:1, 23-35, 1999(a) to name but a few.

[4] Ahl, F., 'The Art of Safe Criticism in Greece and Rome', *American Journal of Philology*, 105, 174-208, 1984; Gale, M.R., 'Propertius 2.7: *Militia Amoris* and the Ironies of Elegy', 1997 on Propertius 2.7

should be treated as fictitious, most scholars regard the elegiac lover too, as a literary construct, a persona or mask, but there is little agreement on the degree of separation between poet and this persona.[5] In the exile letters, the use of names blurs the distinction between the poet in exile and the persona as 'exile' or 'writer' in these letters.

The most recent articles concerned with an ancient understanding of the persona are by Diskin Clay and Roland Mayer. Both writers agree that the concept of a literary persona was different then from that which is held today and that ancient personal poetry was commonly read and heard as autobiographical. Clay looks for a precursor to the modern theory of persona in ancient writings, while Mayer suggests that the idea of a separate persona is an exception rather than the rule in ancient literature and only used in defence against a perceived incorrect reading. Both scholars cite Catullus 16 and *Tristia* 2.353-4 as evidence that ancient authors could distinguish between their own life and the views expressed in their poetry. Catullus, responding to his friends when they assume he is 'not quite decent' like his poems, threatens sexual violence to Aurelius and Furius:

> qui me ex uersiculis meis putastis
> quod sunt molliculi, parum pudicum.
> nam castum esse decet pium poetam
> ipsum, uersiculos nihil necesse est. (16.3-6).
>
> … for thinking me, because my verses are rather sissy, not quite decent. For the true poet should be chaste himself, his verses need not be. (Translation by Guy Lee).[6]

In *Tristia* 2, Ovid appeals to Augustus, pleading his case for recall to Rome or at least a changed place of exile on the grounds that his life is different to his poetry. He writes:

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[5] Lateiner, D., 'Mythic and Non-mythic Artists in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*', *Ramus*, 13.2, 1-30, 1984, p. 7, writes: 'Ovid proclaims some of his *personae*, such as lover and poet-prophet, and disappears into others, simulations which permit an anti-establishment, surrealistic message'.

[6] Lee, Guy, (tr) *Catullus, The Complete Poems*, Oxford, 1990.

> crede mihi, distant mores a carmine nostri –
> uita uerecunda est, Musa iocosa mea –
> magnaque pars mendax operum est ficta meorum:
> plus sibi permisit compositore suo
> nec liber indicium est animi, sed honesta uoluptas;
> plurima mulcendis auribus apta feret. (*Tr*. 2.353-8).
>
> Believe me, my ways distance themselves from my verse, my life is modest, my Muse is playful and the greater part of my work is lying and fictitious. Nor is a book witness of a mind but respectable pleasure, it will bear many things suited to charm the ears.

However, for these poems to succeed as a defence of character they must be read and accepted as the authentic voice of the poet, not as some constructed piece of fiction. Catullus needs to be less than chaste to carry out his threats and *Tristia* 2 needs to be acknowledged as the work of the exiled poet Naso, if his appeal for recall or a better place of exile is to be effective. Writing on *Tristia* 2, many scholars have also pointed out that Ovid contradicts, in the same poem, the position he takes; that his life is different from his poetry.[7] He does this in two ways. First, when he shows that he reads other poets autobiographically by drawing attention to the erotic content of other poets' work in a long passage from line 361 to 470 and by referring to 'wanton Catullus' (*lascivo … Catullo, Tr*. 2.427, and 'alluring Propertius' (*blandi … Properti, Tr*. 2.465. Second, for the poem to succeed as a defence of his character, it must be read and accepted as the authentic voice of the exiled poet Naso, not as some fictitious piece of persuasive writing or *suasoria*. As readers, we tend to look for the author in or behind his or her persona and interest is maintained by the idea that as we read, we learn something about the author, not about some abstract literary construct. Exposure of literary hoaxes and the name behind a

[7] Davis, P.J., 'Instructing the Emperor: Ovid *Tristia* 2', 1999(a); Hinds, S., *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of appropriation in Roman poetry*, Cambridge, 1998; Barchiesi, A., 'Teaching Augustus through Allusion', *Speaking Volumes: Narrative and Intertext in Ovid and Other Latin Poets*, London, 79-104, 2001,Have all written on this subject.

pseudonym is satisfying for this reason and the popularity of performance poetry rests on a similar desire for knowledge.[8]

When we read Ovid's poetry we accept that 'Ovid' is the historical figure Publius Ovidius Naso a Roman poet who was banished to Tomis on the Black Sea even though much of the evidence for this comes from his own poetry.[9] We accept that 'Naso' is the name this poet uses of himself, and we speculate that this may be because of the difficulty of fitting 'Ovidius' into elegiac meter.[10] In Ovid's elegiac work, which of course includes *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*, the narrative voice heard is complex, since elegy is the public portrayal of what is ostensibly a private or personal relationship. The voice is that of a poet speaking in the measured language of poetry but following the conventions of elegy, the narrator is also usually a lover.[11] The elegiac genre of poems has a built-in ambiguity from the dual nature of the professed author; the poet/lover, poet/teacher, and poet/exile. These personal poems encourage an autobiographical reading and evidence for this way of

[8] Carey, Peter, *My Life as a Fake*, Sydney, 2003. This quirky novel is loosely based on the Ern Malley hoax, an event that shook the literary world of Australia in 1944, as two anti-modernists, Harold Stewart and James McAuley set about fooling Max Harris, the editor of the most avant-garde of the literary magazines, Angry Penguins, with poems passed off as the work of an invented writer named Ern Malley. In Carey's novel the invented author-persona becomes an elusive character, who haunts the man who invented him. Carey elaborates the idea of conflicting authors and personae to rueful absurdity. Roberts, Betty, 'Poet of Music and Mischief', Leatherwood, 1.4, 8-11, 1992, writes about the late Tasmanian poet, Gwen Harwood, who had written under the masculine name of Walter Lehmann, in order to increase her exposure in academic journals. She said she enjoyed using masks and disguises but as a result, she had a few poems which she disliked reading in public because of the overt assumption that she herself was the central character.

[9] It is agreed by most scholars that Ovid's last years were spent in exile, the only exception being Fitton Brown, A.D., 'The Unreality of Ovid's Tomitan Exile', *Liverpool Classical Monthly*, 10: 19-22, 1985, whose suggestions are dismissed by Little, D., 'Ovid's Last Poems: Cry of Pain from Exile or Literary Frolic in Rome?', *Prudentia*, 22, 23-39, 1990, even though, as he points out, there is no reference to this exile in any other extant contemporary writing.

[10] Ovid writes of this sort of difficulty when addressing Tuticanus (*Pont*. 4.12) and later refers to him as the person who 'has a name not suited to my meter' (*non aptum mumeris nomen habere meis*, *Pont*. 4.14)

[11] The narrative voice in the exile poems is no longer that of a forsaken lover, although some scholars claim that the elegiac genre requires this and see the 'I' of the exile poems as a lover excluded from the house of his former mistress, Rome. See Miller, P.A., *Subjecting Verses. Latin Love Elegy and the Emergence of the Real*, Princeton and Oxford, 2004, p. 212, and Edwards, C., *Writing Rome: Textual Approaches to the City*, Cambridge, 1996, p. 118.

reading elegy and personal poetry in the ancient world is not hard to find. Catullus, poem 16, demands an autobiographical reading even though the writer has explained that the poem should not be read this way.[12] To prove Catullus' point, the two readers must read the threats in his poetry as evidence of his, the writer's, masculinity. Ovid's poems also encourage an autobiographical reading. Using his own name, he cites personal experience to endorse his claims to be a teacher of love in his *Ars Amatoria*.[13] In this work and the *Remedia Amoris* the didactic nature of the poems requires that the writer have authority born of experience.[14] Personal experience is later denied but not until the poet is writing from exile.

The degree of separation between the author and narrative voice or persona in the case of Ovid changes from poem to poem and also from first poems to last. In the *Heroides*, the distinction between the author and the constructed character is clear and we see the poet using the voice of various mythical or legendary, mostly female characters as a mask or persona. When reciting these poems the male poet would be clearly separate from the voiced female persona of Dido or Penelope. In the more public genres, *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti* we hear the voice of a narrator and a variety of characters.[15] However, while in each work the narrator refers to himself as a poet, he uses his name only once when he addresses the Goddess Flora:

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[12] Clay, Diskin, 'The Theory of the Literary Persona in Antiquity', *Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici*, 40, 9-40, 1998, p. 33, writes: 'Catullus was the first Roman poet … to protest that he could not be read in his book and to disassociate himself from his poetry'. However, Mayer, Roland G., 'Persona<l> Problems', *Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici*, 50; 55-80, 2003, pp. 67-8, writes that although these lines seem to make a 'distinction between the poet as a man and his self-presentation in his poems', he argues that 'poem 16 is not an attempt to divorce the poet from his presumed experience, but to clarify it for the conventionally minded'.

[13] The poet makes a direct and personal approach to the reader at the beginning of his *Ars Amatoria*: 'If anyone in this nation does not know the art of loving, let him read this, and with the poem read, love with skill' (*siquis in hoc artem populo non nouit amandi, / hoc legat et lecto carmine doctus amet, A.A.* 1.1-2). He strains credibility, however, when he professes to teach the god of Love how to love and claims, 'I am the teacher of Love' (*ego sum praeceptor Amoris. A.A.* 1.17).

[14] Authority also comes from Cupid: 'Oh you, who just now give, just now take away, loves troubles, add this also, Naso, to your teachings' (*O, qui sollicitos modo das, modo demis amores, / Adice praeceptis hoc quoque, Naso, tuis, R.A.* 557-8).

[15] For example: *Metamorphoses* 15.871-9 and *Fasti* 4.9.

> floreat ut toto Carmen Nasonis in aeuo
> sparge, precor, donis pectora nostra tuis (*Fasti* 5.377-8)
>
> So that the song of Naso may flourish for all eternity, sprinkle, I pray, my breast with your gifts.

In his early personal poetry we can see a constructed persona, but his pose as 'lover', 'teacher' or 'doctor' is undermined by the use of his own name 'Naso'. The complex voice in the *Amores* is that of a poet and a lover, the poet having the name, 'Naso'. The author refers to this early poetry as the work (*opus*) of 'Naso' at the beginning of book 1:

> qui modo Nasonis fueramus quinque libelli,
> tres sumus; hoc illi praetulit auctor opus.
> ut iam nulla tibi nos sit legisse uoluptas,
> at leuior demptis poena duobus erit. (*Amores Book* 1 *epigramma ipsius*)
>
> We who, just now, were five little books of Naso, are three, the author preferred this work to that. As it may be no pleasure to you to have read them now, but with two taken away, your punishment will be lighter.

At the beginning of *Amores* 2 he adds his place of birth to his name:

> hoc quoque conposui Paelignis natus aquosis,
> ille ego nequitiae Naso poeta meae. (*Amores* 2.1.1)
>
> I, Naso, born in the well-watered land of the Paeligni composed this also; I am the poet of my own worthlessness.

Naso is the poet and the lover – one who writes 'at Love's orders' (*iussit Amor, Amores* 2.1.3) and he is 'one who knows how to love with pure faith' (*qui pura norit amare fide, Amores* 1.3.6). This mask or pose as a trustworthy lover is made visible, however, when it is dropped, as in the second of the paired Cypassis poems (*Amores* 2.7 and 2.8) or when two poems argue the case from contrary points of view (*Amores* 3.4 and 2.19).[16]

[16] *Amores* 2.19 argues against the man who does not guard his mistress while *Amores* 3.4 argues against the man who keeps his mistress under close guard.

The poet makes a direct and personal approach to the reader at the beginning of *Ars Amatoria* when he writes:

> siquis in hoc artem populo non nouit amandi,
> hoc legat et lecto carmine doctus amet. (*Ars Amatoria* 1. 1-2)
>
> If anyone in this nation does not know the art of loving, let him read this, and with the poem read, love with skill.

In this work we see the author pose as a 'teacher of loving' who states 'I do not come as a teacher of loving to the rich' (*Non ego diuitibus uenio praeceptor amandi, Ars Amatoria* 2.161). When he tells his pupils to say 'Naso was the teacher' (*Naso magister erat, Ars Amatoria* 2.744; 3.812) it encourages an autobiographical reading, because the name Naso blurs the distinction between the author and the teacher persona. He cites personal experience, 'experience has moved this work: submit to the expert poet; I shall sing truth' (*usus opus mouet hoc: uati parete perito / uera canam: Ars Amatoria* 1.29-30) to endorse his claims to be able to teach the skills of loving.[17] In the *Remedia Amoris* the writer also refers to his experience, authority and to his own poems when he writes:[18]

> Naso legendus erat tum, cum didicistis amare:
> idem nunc uobis Naso legendus erit. (*Remedia Amoris* 71-2)
>
> When you were learning to love, then you had to read Naso: now you will have to read the same Naso.

Repetition of the name 'Naso' in this couplet draws attention to the author and suggests that the poem should be read autobiographically.

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[17] The author strains credibility, however, when he professes to teach the god of Love how to love and claims, 'I am the teacher of Love' (*ego sum praeceptor Amoris, A.A.* 1.17).

[18] Authority also comes from Cupid: 'Oh you, who just now give, just now take away, loves troubles, add this also, Naso, to your teachings'. (*O qui sollicitos modo das, modo demis amores, / Adice praeceptis hoc quoque, Naso, tuis. R.A.* 557-8).

In the 46 poems of Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto* the name Naso is used 28 times.[19] The exile letters are written in the first person and the 'I' is named Naso, indeed 'Naso' is the first word of the first poem.

> Naso Tomitanae iam non nouus incola terrae
> hoc tibi de Getico litore mittit opus. (*Pont*. 1.1.1-2)
>
> Naso, now not a new resident of the land of Tomis, sends this work to you from the Getic shore.

Frequent reiteration of the name, along with repeated reference to his earlier works, shows that the author is now taking pains to identify himself unambiguously. These last poems are made more personal because, as letters addressed to named individuals, they encourage an autobiographical reading. Having suffered relegation or exile as punishment for his verse and an unnamed error (*carmen et error, Tr*. 2.207) the poet endeavours to draw a distinction between his character and the persona or character portrayed in his poetry. When he writes, 'Believe me, my ways distance themselves from my verse, my life is modest, my Muse is playful' (*crede mihi, distant mores a carmine nostri - / uita uerecunda est, Musa iocosa mea, Tr*. 2.353-4) he seems to make a straightforward distinction between his character and that shown in his verse.[20] Addressing Augustus as reader, the poet goes on to add a further disclaimer, saying that 'lying and fiction' (*mendax … et ficta* Tr. 2.355) make up most of his work, and that 'a book is not evidence of a writer's mind' (*nec liber indicium est animi, Tr*. 2.357). However, his use of the personal and colloquial expression 'believe me' (*crede mihi, Tr*.2.353)[21] focuses attention on the voice in the poem. Can we

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[19] *Epistulae ex Ponto*:1.1.1; 1.3.1; 1.5.2; 1.7.4 & 69; 1.8.1 & 30; 1.10.1; 2.2.2; 2.4.1; 2.5.1; 2.6.2; 2.10.2 & 15; 2.11.2; 3.1.3; 3.4.2; 3.5.4 & 44; 3.6.1; 3.7.13; 4.3.10; 4.6.2; 4.8.34; 4.9.2; 4.14.14; 4.15.2; and 4.16.1.

[20] In a poem to a friend the poet writes from exile: 'Yet my life is well known to you. The ways of the author himself you know to have been withheld from these arts' (*uita tamen tibio nota mea est. scis artibus illis / auctoris mores abstinuisse sui, Tr*. 1.9.59-60).

[21] Ovid has used this expression frequently throughout his poetry but it seems to appear more often in his exile poems. See *Tr*. 2.353; 3.4.25; 3.11.61; 3.14.49; 5.4.23; 5.6.42. *Pont*. 1.4.10; 1.9.37; 2.6.33; 2.7.23;

hear the voice of the poet or author in this expression or just that of the character or persona in the poem? Just who should the reader believe?

The significance of the expression *crede mihi* is elusive. Its form as a conversational exclamation strips it of much of its meaning yet it still serves to draw the reader's attention to the voice heard and to what is being said. *Crede mihi* calls into question the identity of the speaker and, rather than inspiring trust, often casts doubt on whatever claims that speaker is making. In Ovid's earlier work, especially his *Amores* the expression *crede mihi* adds to an ironic reading. The voice heard is that of rather cynical lover: 'believe me, giving calls for genius' (*credi mihi, res est ingeniosa dare, Amores* 1.8.62), but the poet's voice can be heard as well, because the skill called for, genius, is often the 'talent' (*ingenium*) of the poet. We hear a complex voice, that of a poet/lover say: 'believe me, every lover is a soldier' (*crede mihi, militat omnis amans, Amores* 1.9.2) followed by a witty correlation between the hardships suffered by both soldiers and lovers to argue the case. A self-interested lover makes a doubtful claim: 'Believe me, accusations are welcome to no husband' (*crede mihi, nulli sunt crimina grata marito, Amores* 2.2.51) in order to prove that husbands would rather turn a blind eye to marital infidelity. The exhortation by a persuasive lover to a strict husband, 'Ah, trust me and cease to spur on fault by forbidding' (*desine, crede mihi, uitia inritare uetando, Amores* 3.4.11) strikes a note of self-serving insincerity and reminds the reader of the voice of the poet in an earlier poem calling for the husband to be even stricter (*Am*. 2.19). The voice of the author or poet is

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2.9.11; 3.1.61; 3.6.21; 4.2.22; 4.12.47. In his earlier poems see *Amores* 1.8.62; 1.9.2; 2.2.51; 3.4.11; *Her*. 13.155; 16.174 and 344; 17.137; *A.A.* 1.66; 2.464 and 717; 3.653 and 664; *R.A.* 779; *Met*. 1.361; *Fasti* 1.496.

superimposed on that of the 'lover' persona which adds a note of irony to all the statements made by the 'lover'.

In his *Ars Amatoria*, the expression seems to point to a persona in a more straightforward manner.[22] Using the words *crede mihi*, the poet/teacher is asking for belief in an authority based on his personal experience as a skilled lover. We hear the voice of a lover with wide knowledge of women: 'Of these also, (older women) believe me, there shall be a full army' (*hoc quoque crede mihi, plenius agmen erit. A.A.* 1.66) and the voice of an experienced lover and teacher: 'in this place (bed) believe me, loving kindness is born' (*illo, crede mihi, gratia nata loco est, A.A.* 2.464); 'believe me, the pleasure of love is not to be hurried' (*crede mihi, non est Veneris properanda uoluptas, A.A.* 2.717); 'believe me, that girl was not only once with me' (*crede mihi, mecum non semel illa fuit, A.A.* 3.664). In a society based on patronage and gift-giving, the expression makes the voice of the lover sound cynical: 'gifts, believe me, will capture men and gods' (*munera, crede mihi, capiunt hominesque deosque, A.A.* 3.654). All these examples focus on the voice or persona.

The expression *crede mihi* is more to be expected in Ovid's *Heroides* than in the collections just mentioned as these poems are perhaps written in the more colloquial style of a personal letter. However, the voice in these letters is that of a character from myth or story, and the letter is their reaction, as imagined by the poet, to well known events. The phrase seems to be used as unwitting prophesy, alerting the reader to those parts of the story which the character cannot know at the time, but which both poet and reader know

[22] The *Ars Amatoria*, written after the *Amores* covers many of the same themes but from the point of view of a teacher of the techniques of love.

well. Canace makes a very ambiguous statement to Macareus, her brother and lover: ‘dead that I am, believe me, yet at your words I live again’ (*mortua, crede mihi, tamen ad tua uerba reuixi, Heroides* 11.63). Her brother prevents her dying in childbirth but only so that, by her father’s orders, she should kill herself and have her baby killed. When Laodamia speaks about the wax image of her absent husband Protesilaus saying: ‘Believe me, the image is more than it appears’ (*crede mihi, plus est, quam quod uideatur, imago, Heroides* 13.155) she is emphasizing how like her living husband it is but he is already dead. The reader knows that both statements Paris makes to Helen prove false: ‘nor, believe me, will you find it a disgrace to be my wife’ (*nec mea, crede mihi, turpiter uxor eris, Heroides* 16.174) and ‘believe me, that fear of yours (of war to follow) is vain’ (*crede mihi, uanos res habet ista metus, Heroides* 16.344). Both statements cast him in a vain and fallible light. When Helen says to Paris, ‘Of iron, believe me, I am not’ (*ferrea, crede mihi, non sum, Heroides* 17.137) the reader is aware that, although the statement is only too true, her weakness will result in the unsheathing of much iron.

Ovid uses the expression with increasing frequency in his exile poetry but it is found once only in each of his less frivolous poems, *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti*.[23] The letter form of the poems in the *Epistulae ex Ponto* encourages the reader to accept the writer’s claim as truthful through the convention that plain language (it should 'call figs, figs' according to Demetrius, 229)[24] is used in personal letters. Using the expression *crede mihi* in these letters adds a colloquial intensity to the already subjective nature of their content. The voice in these letters is that of the exiled poet ‘Naso’, indicated in many of the opening

[23] In words ascribed to a speaking character: Deucalion, *Met.* 1.361; Carmenta, *Fasti* 1.496.
[24] Rhys Roberts, W., (tr) *Demetrius: On Style*, Cambridge Mass, 1965.

salutations common to letters and reinforced by the convention, also attributed to Demetrius, that letters reveal the writer's character. He writes:

> The letter, like the dialogue should abound in glimpses of character. It may be said that everybody reveals his own soul in his letters. In every other form of composition it is possible to discern the writer's character, but none so clearly as in the epistolary. (Demetrius, *On Style*, 227)

The identity of the speaker in the letters from exile is not in question, rather the expression becomes an appeal for understanding as well as an acknowledgement that the poet's location and circumstances are outside the realms of the believable. The writer as an exile is concerned that his readers should believe the word of his poems or letters, even though his situation is beyond common knowledge or belief by offering the authority of an eye-witness account.[25] The suggestion that words of this particular eye-witness are to be believed, 'since there are no rewards for falsehoods' (*cum sint praemia falsi / nulla*, *Tr*. 3.10.35) is a convoluted claim and strains the reader's understanding of the nature of poetic truthfulness.

In a similar fashion, when the poet appeals to his reader, the poet Atticus, to consider his past reputation as a 'speaker of truth' (*veri … oris*, *Pont*. 2.7.23)[26] the expression is laden with ambiguity regarding the 'truthfulness' of the poet's voice. We are especially reminded of an earlier disclaimer:

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[25] When the poet writes: 'those who come from there report that you scarcely believe all this; how wretched is he who bears what is too harsh for belief' (q*ui ueniunt istinc uix uos ea credere dicunt. / quam miser est qui fert asperiora fide! Pont*. 4.10.35-6), he points up his changed perspective, 'there' is Rome to the writer now he is in exile. See Chapter One above.

[26] 'Believe me, if I am known to you as the mouth of truth (and it cannot be that my misfortunes involve fraud' (*Crede mihi, si sum ueri tibi cognitus oris /* (*nec fraus in nostris casibus esse potest) Pont*. 2.7.23-4). (The text is uncertain but I have followed the Loeb edition). Green, P., *Ovid: The Poems of Exile*, Harmondsworth, 1994(a), p. 324, comments on the variant readings of *fraus* or *planis* with the best manuscript tradition bearing out the latter (See Richmond, J.A., *P. Ovidius Nasonis, ex Ponto libri quattuor*, Leipzig, 1990, p. 44) but Green stresses that the sense is clear whichever word is used. At p. 144, he translates this phrase as 'believe me, if my veracity's ever impressed you – and no one in my position could play the cheat …' which reminds the reader of *Tr*. 3.10.35 noted above.

exit in inmensum fecunda licentia uatum
obligat historica nec sua uerba fide
et mea debuerat falso laudata uideri
femina; credulitas nunc mihi uestra nocet. (*Amores* 3.12 .41-44)

The fertile license of poets pours forth without measure, nor are its words obligated to historical fidelity. My lady's praising by me, you should have seen as false, now your credulity harms me.

Before exile the poet excuses his poetic words from truthfulness and blames his reader's credulity for causing his, the poet/lover's, present problem. The distinction between the poet and his persona (the lover) is first made, then blurred: the poet was falsely praising, it is the lover who is harmed by the loss of his girl. But the lover is also the poet who writes for credulous readers. The ancient reader may recognize that the whole poem, including this disclaimer, is 'the fertile license' of a poet although the poet/lover indicates that this is not the usual way of reading his poems. The writer makes it clear that the common reader has believed that the poet speaks the truth about the charms of his mistress and has acted accordingly, by taking that same mistress from him. The idea of the reader's response can also be seen as a technique or mechanism used by the poet to add realism to an artfully constructed poem in the same way that many people see the actions and response of the mistress-persona as constructed and written into love elegy.

There is no clear distinction between poets as 'speakers of truth' and the 'fertile license' of poets. In a letter laden with allusion to poetry as the legacy of Hesiod's encounter with the Muses, the poet asks to be allowed to 'speak the truth' (*dicere uera, Pont.* 4.2.4) when admitting that he is ashamed not to have written earlier in verse to Severus, a friend and

poet.[27] In this context, reference to 'truth' could allude to the beginning of the *Theogony*, where Hesiod has the Muses say, before inspiring the 'shepherd' to become a poet: 'we know to tell many lies that sound like truth, but we know to sing reality when we will'.[28] It is left to the reader to decide which of these two abilities was given to Hesiod as inspiration, or if indeed both were given by the Muses. The phrase: 'they breathed into me wondrous voice'[29] does not settle the question of whether poetry is lies or truth (perhaps it is always both) but does indicate that poetry is a direct result of the Muses' inspiration. In an article expressing a new reading of Hesiod's *Theogony*, 26-8, Katz and Volk (2000) point out that 'from earliest times the Greeks knew both the idea of the poet as a skilled human creator and the notion that he was merely an instrument of the Muses' and they show a link between poetry and prophecy which allows that shepherds as 'mere bellies' could be seen as 'vessels for the divine voice that breathes into them'.[30] The Muses can sing both 'lies as truth' and 'sing reality', but they inspire Hesiod and are the source of his authority. Many poets refer to the Muses' poetic inspiration not only as authentication but also as a rationalization for the production of poetry.

It becomes a commonplace among later poets to refer to the Muses or their home on Mount Helicon as the source of poetic inspiration and the poetic voice retains the dual

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[27] 'cultivating Helicon' (*Helicona colentes, Pont.* 4.2.11); 'the Muse' (*musa, Pont.* 4.2.27); 'the muses, goddesses who have not served me well' (*Pierides…/ non bene de nobis quae meruere deae, Pont.* 4.2.45-6); 'but you, by whom the Aonius Fountain is more happily being drunk' (*at tu, cui bibitur felicius Aonius fons, Pont.* 4.2.47); 'worship deservedly the religion of the Muses' (*sacraque Musarum merito cole…Pont.* 4.2.49).

[28] West M.L., (tr) *Hesiod: Theogony, Works and Days*, 1988, p. 3.

[29] West M.L., (tr) *Hesiod: Theogony, Works and Days*, 1988, p. 4.

[30] Katz, J. and Volk, K., ''Mere Bellies'?: A new look at *Theogny* 26-8', *Journal Of Helenic Studies*, 120, 122-131, 2000, p. 128. These scholars take a new look at the descriptive term for shepherds as 'mere bellies'. They differ from most others who see the words simply as emphasizing the rustic and uncivilized nature of shepherds. They suggest that 'bellies' as organs of prophecy indicate that the shepherd is an unwitting instrument of the Muses' voice. See also p. 124, 'the ancient world knew of a form of prophecy that specifically employed the belly', which could be seen as divine 'vessels', p. 127.

nature (a polarity between the truth and lies) of this inspiration. Along with the epithet 'best poet' (*maxime uates, Pont*. 4.2.1) for his friend Severus, the elevated status afforded an 'inspired' poet is evident from Ovid's reference to divine stimulation of the 'spirits of poets' when, from exile, the poet explains his lack of 'inspiration':

> inpetus ille sacer qui uatum pectora nutrit,
> qui prius in nobis esse solebat, abest. (*Pont*. 4.2.25-6)
>
> That sacred impulse, which nourishes the spirits of poets, and which before used to be in mine, is gone away.

A serious and religious tone is established in the couplet by the word 'sacred' and the choice of the word *uates* for 'poet' (*uatum, Pont*. 4.2.25). A *uates* is a priest, prophet or seer yet here, in Ovid's poetry, the word has an ambiguity; its two distinct meanings combine and emphasize the mysterious nature of the 'talent' (*ingenium, Pont*. 4.2.15) of 'poets' and their special status in society.[31] Although the roles of the prophet, priest and poet are linked by the use of measured language, the names for each are distinct and separate until the first use of *uates*, to mean great or inspired poet rather than priest or seer, is made by Virgil. Newman (1967) writing on 'the concept of *uates*' in his book *Augustus and the New Poetry*, suggests that Virgil introduced 'a new word for poet, *uates* [and that] … unlike *poeta*, *uates* was a word of solemn religious significance'.[32] He writes: 'the word was … connected by him [Virgil] with Apollo, and made the poet a being of more than

[31] The poet uses the word *ingenium* many times; often it is self-referential and often ambiguous. *Amores* 1.15.2, 14; 2.18.11; 3.1.25.

[32] Newman, J.K., *Augustus and the New Poetry*, *Latomus*, 88, 1967, pp. 99-104, looks at the semantic history of the word *uates* and wonders if its occurrence in *Eclogues* VII, 28: IX, 33-4 was 'just a piece of Alexandrian learning?' Newman writes that '…at the time of Augustus … an Alexandrian revolution which could not be rejected … was confronted with a Roman revolution in politics which offered hopes of the restoration of a new and purged *res publica*'. He also writes, p. 109, that 'Horace … took up Virgil's neologism in the *Epodes* (XVI end; XVII, 44)'. He suggests that *uates* is a special category of poets, who have an obligation to write serious poetry which will have a beneficial impact on society. He also writes of Virgil, pp. 120-121, that: 'since the first occurrence of the word in the sense of 'poet' in the *Eclogues* … by the sixth book of the *Aeneid* in which the religious and poetic aspects of *uates* become intermingled in an Apolline context, he claims himself to be a *uates* (VII, 41)'.

ordinary powers'.[33] He maintains that Virgil's frequent use of the word *uates* as seer or prophet in his *Aeneid* does much to rid the word of its traditional overtones of trickery and deceit before applying it to himself as poet/narrator (*Aen* 7.41) to explain that he is now inspired to write of greater things (*Aen*. 7.44).[34] Newman looks at the concept of *uates* as a marker for the title 'new poets' and, in keeping with the scholarship of the 1960's, gives a less than favourable account of Ovid's handling of the word.[35] He draws attention to Ovid's elevation of the *poeta* to the realms of the sacred:

> ... evidently he was pleased by his coinage of *sacer poeta*, which enabled him to enjoy the status of *uates* (sacer) without actually having the obligations which the open assumption of the title might have imposed.[36]

Rather than recognize in Ovid's poetry only 'lineaments of Virgil's original conception'[37] of the word *uates*, a wider point of view is possible based on evidence of Ovid's appreciation and use of the complex layers of meaning of the word.

Although the word *uates* is not used with 'priest or prophet' as its specific meaning in either *Tristia* or the *Epistulae ex Ponto*, Ovid uses it instead of the less ambiguous *poeta* to indicate the fame or greatness of a poet derived from the inspiration of the Muses or

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[33] Newman, J.K., *Augustus and the New Poetry*, 1967, looking at the works of Virgil, Horace, Propertius, Tibullus and Ovid for the appearance of the word *uates* meaning 'poet', has constructed an admirable table of dates and usage, p. 136. He writes, pp. 181-2, that 'Horace had a more complex attitude' and 'Tibullus toyed with *uates*-language' and that 'Propertius … was not averse to playing with *uates*-language'.

[34] Newman, J.K., *Augustus and the New Poetry*, 1967, p. 111-128.

[35] Newman, J.K., *Augustus and the New Poetry*, 1967, p. 193, writes: 'Of course the poet had some idea of what was originally meant by *uates*, but not enough to persuade him to change his essentially light, fluent, polished and superficial style'. He is dismissive of Ovid's use of the word, pp. 182-193, and sums up: '…that in spite of appearances Ovid does not really understand the *uates*-concept at all'.

[36] Newman, J.K., *Augustus and the New Poetry*, 1967, pp. 193-4, suggests that the term *vates* carries with it obligations to write serious poetry for the good of society. He goes on to write of Ovid's use of the word *uates* in *Ars Amatoria*: 'at III, 403ff., *poeta* become *sacri*: at III, 539, *uates* are *sacri*. At 547 and 551 *uates* and *poetae* are again interchangeable'.

[37] Newman, J.K., *Augustus and the New Poetry*, 1967, p. 195.

gods.[38] Both *uates*, with its double meaning, and the straightforward *poeta* can be found in his work, with *uates* appearing more often than *poeta* in *Epistulae ex Ponto*, although its use is restricted to just eight of the forty-six poems comprising this work.[39] The terms are mostly self-referential and show that in exile, so far from his audience, the poet is concerned to identify closely with his work.

The complexity of meaning of the word *uates* is evident in a letter, *ex Ponto* 3.4, written to Rufinus, a friend to whom, it seems, the poet has entrusted a poem celebrating an imperial triumph, a great theme that would be a burden even for Virgil, 'the mighty poet' (*summo ... uati*, *Pont*. 3.4.83-4). After asking Rufinus and his fellow poets to promote this work he writes:

> inrita motorum non sunt praesagia uatum.
> danda Ioui laurus, dum prior illa uiret.
> nec mea uerba legis, qui sum summotus ad Histrum
> non bene pacatis flumina pota Getis.
> ista dei uox est: deus est in pectore nostro;
> haec duce praedico uaticinorque deo. (*Pont*. 3.4.89-94)
>
> The prophecies of inspired poets are not empty. The laurel must be given to Jupiter while that first one flourishes. It is not my words you read: I am banished to the Hister whose waters are drunk by the scarcely pacified Getans. The voice is that of a god, a god is in my breast. With a god as leader, I predict and prophesy these things.

The passage shows that the poet considers himself 'inspired' or moved to write with the 'voice of a god'. Because he is absent from Rome and the events occurring there the poet seems to claim truth through a higher authority, the god whose voice he utters in order to

[38] Ovid uses the word *uates* meaning prophet or seer in his earlier poems, *Heroides*: 5.123; 16.48,49 and 125; 17.239; 21.235; *Metamorphoses*: 3.348, 517 and 527; 7.761, 9.407; 11.429; 13.320, 335, 720, and 774; 14.129; 15.435; *Fasti*: 1.37 and 585; 5.97; 6.535 and 537.

[39] In *Tristia* the word *uates* is used 10 times, in *Epistulae ex Ponto* it is used 16 times: (*Tr*. 1.6.21, 3.7.20, 3.14.7, 4.4.17, 4.10.42, 5.3.31, 5.7.22, 5.7.55, 5.9.10; *Pont.* 2.1.55, 2.5.58, 2.9.53, and 65 twice, 3.4.17, 65, 84, and 89, 4.2.1, and 25, 4.8.43, and twice 67, 4.14.34, 4.16.21) while *poeta* occurs 14 times in *Tristia* and 10 times in *Epistulae ex Ponto* (*Tr*. 1.5.57, 1.6.1, 1.7.3, 2.1.507, 3.1.16 and 23, 3.3.74, 4.10.41 and 125, 5.1.3 and 73, 5.3.1, 33 and 47; *Pont.* 1.5.31 and 66, 2.10.17, 3.4.9 and 67, 3.5.4, 3.6.51, 3.9.48, 4.13.18 and 21).

prophesy this triumph.[40] A reference to prophecies is always challenging because both poets and seers often speak or write about things which are hard to believe and open to various interpretations.[41] The words and stories of both prophets and poets are recounted in poetic language, not the language of common speech.[42] When the poet writes about 'the prophecies of poets' (*praesagia uatum*, *Pont*. 3.4.89) it serves to arrest the attention of the reader and to focus again on the narrative voice. We wonder which 'prophecies' and which 'poets' are meant. The phrase could be self-referential and calls to mind Ovid's best known prophecy, made in the last words of his *Metamorphoses*:

> siquid habent ueri uatum praesagia, uiuam. (*Met*. 15.879)
>
> If the prophecies of poets have anything of truth, I shall live.

While raising the same doubts about the identity of poets and the truth of their prophecies, the phrase here makes clear an identification of the poet with his work. The poet may die but his poetry will live on. The poet <u>is</u> the poetry he has produced.[43] All famous poets are proved true prophets of their own greatness when their works are remembered and read

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[40] I follow the Loeb throughout. Wheeler A. L, (tr) and G.P. Gould, (ed) *Ovid. Tristia*, *Ex Ponto*, Cambridge, Mass., 1996. Here, 404, *motorum* (Pont 3.4 89) '*uotorum*,corr Heinsius), and the first line is translated as 'the prophecies of inspired bards are not empty'. Richmond, J.A. (1990) gives *uotorum* as the best manuscript tradition. Leavitt, J., (ed) *Poetry and Prophecy: The Anthropology of Inspiration*, Ann Arbor, 1997, p. 10, writes: 'Both poetry and prophecy then, come from divine sources, the Muses in one case, Apollo in the other'.

[41] Leavitt, J., (ed) *Poetry and Prophecy*, 1997, p. 3, writes: 'Both poetry and prophecy are culturally marked forms of speech, and one criterion at least, of the marking of them both, is power ... to communicate information but also to persuade, exalt, frighten and evoke.

[42] Leavitt, J., (ed) *Poetry and Prophecy*, 1997, p. 130, also writes: 'The similarities between poetry and prophecy are often claimed against the …difference between craft and inspiration. A great poet is felt to be inspired; a great prophetic utterance gains some of its power from the poetic nature of the language in which it is couched'.

[43] The same sentiment is expressed in Ovid's so-called autobiographical poem, *Tr*. 4.10 when the poet writes: 'Therefore if there is anything of truth in the prophecies of poets, though I die at once, I shall not be yours, Earth' (*si quid habent igitur uatum praesagia ueri / protinus ut moriar, non ero, terra, tuus*, *Tr*. 4.10.129-130) and again in *Amores* 3.9 about the poetry of Tibullus.

long after death. However, the conditional 'if' always implies doubt and the truth of poets is always in question.[44]

Engagement with poetic truth and poetic inspiration is also evident in *ex Ponto* 3.3, where the poet, in a letter to Fabius Maximus, recounts a dream or vision. Evaluation of this vision is left open as the poet offers three alternative explanations; each one emphasizing the elusive nature of poetic truth. The first alternative 'the shadow of a body' (*corporis umbra, Pont*. 3.3.3) evokes ghosts or the shades of the dead, a common literary device where the dead are granted a greater knowledge than the living and whose revelations add the force of truth to the narrative. By using the words 'the appearance of reality' or 'the face of truth' (*ueri species, Pont*. 3.3.4) the poet stresses that what follows is to be believed. However, the word, 'sleep' (*sopor, Pont*. 3.3.4), here understood to mean 'dream', throws the question open again as dreams are always complex and enigmatic, especially in literature. Russel (1988) writing about English Dream Vision poetry, looks to its origin in antiquity and writes: 'the Latin poets used the dream as an effective dramatic device – taunting, premonitory, yet always ambiguous'.[45] There is no doubt that in this verse-letter the dream or vision is a clever depiction of a poet's interaction with a god and while it evades the question of authenticity, its content and the voice of a god gives credence to both the dream and the dreamer.

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[44] The poet acknowledges that there is a thin line between a good story and the lies of poets. See in *Fasti* 'Indeed, I saw you not (farewell lies of poets) nor should you be seen, goddess, by a man' (n*on equidem uidi (ualeant mandacia uatum) te, dea, nec fueras aspicienda uiro, Fasti* 6.253-4). The goddess in question is Vesta who has no visible image, only an eternal flame, *Fasti* 6.298, (but see also *Fasti* 2.69; 3.141 and 6.437, 713 for conflicting representations of Vesta).

[45] Russell, J.S., *The English Dream Vision: Anatomy of a Form*, Columbus, 1988, p. 33, looks at the works of Lucretius, Cicero, Artemidorus and Macrobius and writes, p. 57: 'On the subject of dreams, their causes and their worth, Cicero is as clear-headed as Lucretius: despite his having been elected augur in 53B.C., Cicero wrote (in *De Diuinatione*) a blistering attack on the notion of the revelation in dreams, lumping oneiromancers together with magicians and charlatans'.

The dream narrative here can be seen as a way to make communication more intimate between writer and reader, by describing a state (dreaming) that both have experienced. The dream event bridges the gap between them, a gap widened by Ovid's exile. An increased concern about the distance between the writer and reader is established in the first line of this poem, with the writer designated as an 'exiled friend' (*profugo … amico, Pont*. 3.3.1) and it is reinforced by the content and the letter form of the poem. That this exiled friend is a poet or story-teller is signaled by the formulaic opening to his description, 'it was night' (*nox erat, Pont*. 3.3.5).[46] The identity of this particular poet is indicated by a clear reference to Ovid's own work which sets the scene for the dream sequence to follow. The words 'sleep, that common relaxation of cares, was holding me' (*publica me requies curarum somnus habebat, Pont*. 3.3.7) are almost the same as those used in an earlier letter sent to this same Fabius Maximus where dreams are mentioned and the poet complains that his sleep is not restful but disturbed.[47]

Although the greater part of this poem (*Pont*. 3.3.5-94) is a description of a dream sequence, the many similarities with and allusions to the poet's other works makes the reader concentrate on the narrator. The voice is that of a well known poet, who explains how he came to be dreaming in a way that recalls, through mention of the light through the

[46] As well as establishing the ideal time for sleep and dreams, this opening reminds the reader of other literary nights of dreams and other famous exiles come to mind. For example, in Virgil's work the dream Aeneas has while wandering in exile looking for a place to call home opens with this formula 'it was night' (*nox erat, Aen*. 3.147) and follows with a similar description: 'where the full moon streamed through the inset windows' (*qua se / plena per insertas fundebat luna fenestras, Aen*. 3.151-2). See also Kragelund, P., *Dream and Prediction in the Aeneid*, Copenhagen, 1976.

[47] The similarity is inescapable when we compare the words: 'sleep, that common relaxation of cares, was holding me' (*publica me requires curarum somnus habebat, Pont*. 3.3.7) with the words: 'when rest and sleep, the common healer of cares, attend me' (*…cum requires medicinaque publica curar / somnus adest… Pont*. 1.2.41-2). Both poems are sent to the same addressee and the content and style establishes that the writer is the same too.

windows and the position of his limbs on the bed, that famous dream-like afternoon interlude, his *Amores* 1.5.[48] Having established a pleasant memory, the poet introduces an element of 'terror' (*territus, Pont*. 3.3.11) sufficient to drive off sleep, 'sleep was gone' (*somnus abit, Pont*. 3.3.12) which makes this description both less dreamlike, since the dreamer is awake, and more dreamlike as all the traditional elements of dream are left in place. The appearance of a god, 'Love' (*Amor, Pont*. 3.3.13) is inexplicable except as dream or vision. His bedraggled state reminds the reader of other well-known dreams where the god or ghost is changed in some way.[49] Disordered hair, however, is a common as a sign of mourning, and recalls a previous manifestation of Cupid in an earlier poem by Ovid, *Amores* 3.9, describing the funeral of friend and poet Tibullus.[50] Although in the poem *ex Ponto* 3.3 the disheveled appearance of face and hair is stressed, attention is also focused on the state of the wings of the boy-god Cupid.[51] Here, as in *Amores* 3.9 he is changed from the laughing, triumphant, golden figure, with jewels on his wings, shown in Ovid's earlier poems.[52] This unkempt appearance of Cupid may reinforce the fictionality

[48] We read 'window or shutters' (*fenestras, Pont*. 3.3.5 and *fenestrae, Amores* 1.5.3) in both poems and reference to 'limbs on the bed' (*membra toro, Pont*. 3.3.8 and *membra … toro, Amores* 1.5.2) is also found in both.

[49] See the wounded Hector (*Aen*. 2.268ff), the image of Mercury (*Aen*. 4.455ff), the river Tiber as god (*Aen*. 8.26ff) appearing to Aeneas and the Fury, Allecto, in the form of an old priestess (*Aen*. 7.415ff) appearing to Turnus, are examples. Kragelund, P., *Dream and Prediction in the Aeneid*, 1976.

[50] 'Look the boy of Venus, and he bears his quiver reversed, and a broken bow and torches without light. Look, how wretched he comes with let-down wings and his bared breast he beats with a hostile hand. His tears are captured by the hair scattered around his neck and his mouth sounds with shaking sobs' (*ecce, puer ueneris fert eversamque pharetram / et fractosarcus et sine luce facem / adspice, demissis ut eat miserabilis alis / pectoraque infesta tundat aperta manu / excipiunt lacrimas sparsi colla capilli / oraque singultu concutiente sonat. Amores* 3.9.7-12).

[51] '… his face was not as it used to be earlier' (*uultu non quo prius esse solebat, Pont*. 3.3.13) and 'his orderly locks were not as well arranged as before' (*nec bene dispositas comptus ut ante comas, Pont*. 3.3.16. Note also: 'Over his bristling face his soft locks were hanging and his wing feather, seemed to my eyes bristling just as a feather is accustomed to be on the back of an airy dove, which many hands have touched and handled' (*horrida pendebant molles super ora capilli / et uisa est oculis horrida penna meis,/ qualis in aeriae tergo solet esse columbae / tractatam multae quam tetigere manus. Pont*. 3.3.17- 20).

[52] 'Cupid is said to have laughed' (*…risisse Cupido / dicitur…Amores* 1.1.3); 'joyous in triumph' (*laeta triumphanti, Amores* 1.2.39) 'You, with gems adorning your wings, gems adorning your hair, yourself golden, you will go on golden wheels' (*tu pinnas gemma, gemma uariante capillos / ibis in auratis aureus*

of previous descriptions or suggest, through the idea that gods may mourn like mortals, that this vision may be closer to the 'face of truth'.[53] The poet expresses little doubt about his acceptance of the appearance of the god in this poem. However, in an earlier poem, the *Remedia Amoris,* the narrator expresses considerable doubt about the vision of Cupid as the source of advice given to 'Naso' to enhance his teaching. He writes: 'I doubt whether it was true Cupid or sleep, but I think it was sleep' (*dubito uerusne Cupido /an somnus fuerit, sed puto somnus erat, R.A.* 555-6) and closes the advice given with equally uncertain lines: 'the image of the boy left calm sleep, if it was only sleep' (*placidum puerilis imago / destituit somnum, si modo somnum erat, R.A.* 575-6). In these passages 'sleep' must be synonymous with 'dream' and may be used to stress the unpredictable nature of the sleeping state and the capricious nature of the dream.

A dream sequence always makes the reader focus on the identity of the dreamer, the character who appears and speaks in the dream and also the writer who is telling the dream story. The reader can discern three different first persons: the 'I' of the writer, the 'I' speaking in the dream and the 'I' of the replying god and three different second persons; the 'you' of the reader, the 'you' of both the dreamer and the god as depicted in the dialogue. This variety of 'persons', both grammatical and literary as well as the varied time-frames and locations from which they speak, highlights the individual narrative voices. Each has a separate present and past and this is further complicated when the reader

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ipse rotis, Amores 1.2.41-2) and 'golden Love moves his jeweled wings' (*mouit Amor gemmates aureus alas, R.A.* 40).

[53] Note the repeated use of the adjective 'bristling' (*horrida, Pont*. 3.3.17, 18) to describe both face and wing feathers and the verbal form 'bristled' (*inhorruit, Pont*. 3.3.9) used to announce the presence of the god can be seen to emphasize the frightening aspect of meeting with a god face to face to learn the truth.

remembers that the poem is in the form of a letter, where the 'now' for writer and reader is always different.

Reference to the earlier times, actions and works of all persons in the poem, the writer, as well as the dreamer and the god in the dream, conflates the distinction between the narrator of the dream and the dreamer in the dream. The latter, as a linguistic or literary persona, is part of the story told by the writer and the attitudes and opinions expressed by the dreamer in this dream reinforce those uttered elsewhere by the writer. Dreams, in ancient times, were understood to be clearly connected with the preoccupations of the dreamer, and tend to represent wishes as realities.[54] Dreams can also be messages from the gods, but even in literature these messages are regularly seen as closely linked to the desires or fears of the dreamer.[55]

In *Pont*.3.3 the interchange between the god and the dreamer relates directly to the concerns of the exiled poet, the writer who uses it to explore the degree of his guilt and the appropriateness of his punishment and to express a hope for a change of heart in his punisher. The dream is a legitimate vehicle for the examination of a difficult subject: the crime and punishment of the poet. The topic is difficult because it has been raised many times before and also because it is directed toward changing the mind of a powerful ruler. As an innovative treatment of this familiar theme the dream sequence makes good use of

[54] Russell, J.S., *The English Dream Vision*, 1988, p. 55, writes: 'Lucretius views dreams as manifestations of a troubled spirit'.
[55] Russell, J.S., *The English Dream Vision*, 1988, pp. 74-5 also writes: 'The classical authorities were aware of the canonical dream visitations from the gods but were unwilling to accord these a central place in their discussions, fearing that ignorant men would be led astray by credulous beliefs that Jove or Venus might visit them too in sleep'.

two narrative voices or personae, the dreamer and the boy-god, to argue the case as justification for clemency.

The relationship between the dreamer and his vision of Cupid is worked out in terms of a shared past in which the dreamer was the teacher of the boy-god of Love. Pointed reference to poetic works by Ovid blurs the distinction between the dreamer and the poet/writer of the dream. When the dreamer says to Cupid: 'I brought it about that you should not be unskilled by my arts' (*feci / artibus ut posses non rudis esse meis, Pont.* 3.3.37-8)[56] and 'while I give arms to you' (*dum damus arma tibi, Pont.* 3.3.47)[57] it is clear that the dreamer and the god share the same past which has been written by the poet. A clever re-working of the defence given in *Tristia* 2.245ff with reference to 'legitimate' marriage beds and the disclaimers in *Ars Amatoria* centering on the costume of married women is inserted into the dreamer's plea for Cupid to make Augustus less angry.[58] This creates a further fusion between the dreamer persona and the letter writer. In his letters, the exiled poet abandons the argument offered in *Tristia* (that his character is different to his verse, that most of his work is lies and fiction and that a book is not evidence of the

[56] This seems to refer to the poet's *Ars Amatoria* where he claims 'I am the teacher of Love' (*ego sum praeceptor Amoris, A.A.* 1.17). The word 'arts' (*artibus, Pont.* 3.3.38) is also a pointed reference to the name of this work but could be read simply as skills or poetry. The word 'arts' is repeated by Cupid who seems to know the 'arts' well enough to swear by everything that is sacred to him that the poem (or skills) did not constitute a crime.

[57] As a teacher in Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*, the narrator professes to give weapons to Romans, both men and women (*A.A.* 2.741) and also to the Amazons (*A.A.* 3.1-2).

[58] When we compare 'I have not disturbed legitimate marriage beds' (*non me legitimos sollicitasse toros, Pont.* 3.3.50) with 'to disturb forbidden marriage beds' (*uetitos sollicitare toros, Tr.* 2.346), the difference is as striking as the similarity. Note also that the disclaimer in the couplet: This I wrote for those whom no headband touches their modest hair nor long stola their feet' (*scripsimus haec illis quarum nec uitta pudicos / contingit crines nec stola longa pedes, Pont.* 3.3.51-2) is a re-quotation of the disclaimer:'Far from me you narrow headbands, signs of modesty, and you, long hem of a woman's gown, covering the middle of the feet' (*este procul, uittae tenues, insigne pudoris / quaeque tegis medios instita longa pedes, Tr.* 2.247-8) which comes from his 'Art' *Ars Amatoria*, 1.34-4; and 2.599. Other disclaimers appear at *A.A.* 3.27,58,611.

writer's mind but just entertainment) because now it undermines the strength of his personal appeal for a changed place of exile.

The longer Ovid is absent from Rome the more he needs to be identified closely with his poetry. In many of his letters the poet links his life and his circumstances in exile with the kind of verse he writes. He tells his friend Brutus:

> laeta fere laetus cecini, cano tristia tristis
> conueniens operi tempus utrumque suo est (*Pont.* 3.9.35-6)
>
> Happy I often sang happy things, sad, I sing sad things and each time is suiting its own work.

The letter form emphasizes the intimate and subjective point of view and demonstrates that an increased use of the name Naso, and frequent references to well known earlier poetry all combine to blur the distinction between the author of the poems and the character or voice in them. These tactics are used by the poet to eliminate the distance caused by exile in order to have just one voice heard in Rome, the voice of the author, Publius Ovidius Naso.

Chapter Four

The Recipient-persona in the letters of Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto.*

In Chapter Three, I have shown that, because of his distance from Rome, Ovid frequently uses his own name, Naso, to blur the distinction between his voice as the author and that of any constructed persona in the *Epistulae ex Ponto*. Distance cannot be overcome in any physical way since the poet must stay in Tomis until his place of exile is changed or the sentence of relegation is lifted by the one who imposed it and therefore the poet must use letters instead of the spoken word. I have also shown (above Chapter Two) that the letter form encourages the use of names and is necessary to overcome the distance between the poet in exile and his audience in Rome, following the convention that letters are a substitute for conversation, where writing and reading are employed as a means of communication instead of speech and hearing. The acts of writing and reading are acknowledged within each letter and we, as external readers, see how the poet constructs, and then blurs, more than one voice or persona in each poem; there is a writer, a suffering exiled poet as well as the recipient, a responsive reader and usually a sympathetic friend.

It is significant that Ovid addresses the recipients of most of these letters by names associated with well known Roman citizens. By naming names, coupling his name as sender with that of the recipient, the poet adds emphasis to the sentiments expressed earlier in his exile poems where he wrote: 'I wish to be with you all in some way, no matter how' (*uobiscum cupio quolibet esse modo, Tr.* 5.1.80). The familiar and intimate form of

personal letters, which include the well known names of his friends, can make the exiled poet feel closer to Rome.[1]

Names are important and I look at how the inclusion of the names of prominent Roman citizens in Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto,* affects our perception of the persona. I argue that the poet's use of so many names of prominent Roman identities in these letters is both striking and innovative. In the first poem of the first book, addressed to Brutus, the poet announces his intention of naming names whether the recipients like it or not. He writes 'This you do not want, but neither are you able to stop it and the troublesome Muse comes, against your will' (*nec uos hoc uultis, sed nec prohibere potestis / Musaque ad inuitos officiosa uenit, Pont.* 1.1.19-20). We, as readers, are introduced by name, to a wide network of friends, relatives and a miscellany of influential people in the poet's *Epistulae ex Ponto*. Names establish a mutual acquaintance between the poet and these Roman citizens and serve to personalize the sentiments expressed in the poems. They reveal the status of those well-known family members who are able to appeal to the emperor on behalf of the poet as well as affiliations and interconnections between families within Roman society. Today these connections are laboriously pieced together but in the small world of Ovid's Rome they would have been common knowledge.[2] The fusion between the private nature of the letter with its personal names, and the public nature of published verse, adds a certain tension to the work. When the duty or obligation of a named individual is common knowledge,

[1] Hardie, Philip, *Ovid's Poetics of Illusion*, Cambridge, 2002, p. 283, writes: 'this epistolary image of himself offers the only possibility for direct intercourse with his nearest and dearest'. Ovid, in his exile poems, makes reference to how he feels closer to Rome by seeing with his mind's eye, using his imagination and the power of his mind: *Pont.* 1.8.34; 1.9.45-8; 2.8.19-20; 2.10.45-48; 3.3.1-4; 3.5.47-8; 4.4.45-6.

[2] Syme, R., *History in Ovid*, Oxford, 1978. This work is the most significant contribution to modern scholarship on this subject.

through publication as verse, the poet's appeal for help may be reinforced by that individual's wish for public approval or fear of public censure. The poet acknowledges the public nature of his work in a letter to Brutus when he defends the repetitious nature of his verse and the wide dissemination of his appeal. He writes:

> cum totiens eadem dicam, uix audior ulli
> uerbaque profectu dissimulata carent.
> et tamen haec eadem cum sint, non scripsimus isdem
> unaque per plures uox mea temptat opem.
> an, ne bis sensum lector reperiret eundem,
> unus amicorum, Brute, rogandus eras? (*Pont.* 3.9.39-44)
>
> Since I say the same thing so often, scarcely anyone is listening and the words, ignored, lack success. And although they are the same words, I did not write them to the same people and my voice, which is one, tries for help through many. Or, Brutus, should you be the only one of my friends to be asked, for fear that some reader may gain the same sense twice?

We can see here, that the poet is alert to the effect repetition has on both his appeals and his fame, yet he tells us that all his letters are intended for publication when he writes: 'later I collected them and joined them together somehow, without order,' (*postmodo conlectas utcumque sine ordine iunxi, Pont.* 3.9.53).[3] The 'books' (*libellis, Pont.*3.9.1) have to have been in the public domain as a collection in order for somebody (*nescio quem, Pont.* 3.9.2) to hear more than one and so complain about the repetitious nature of them.[4] The impact of the poems is changed when they are published as a collection and the poet's appeal to named individuals becomes widely known even though the poet is absent in exile.

[3] I have looked at the author's intention concerning these letters and the ambiguity inherent in claiming them as letters while he acknowledges that they are a collection, in my Chapter Two, page 92.
[4] The poet seems to refer to books 1-3 comprised of 30 individual verse letters as this reference occurs in the final letter of book 3 and reflects sentiments expressed in *ex Ponto* 1.1.1-2.

Because of the name, we look for clues to the character of each person in the poems but the portrait is often sketchy or formulaic, and often the name alone serves in place of a full depiction. The poems are styled as letters between the poet and well-known people, so only those aspects of character which the poet deems helpful to an exiled poet are emphasized. For instance, the poet's description of Fabius Maximus: 'Maximus, eloquence of Roman Tongue' (*suscipe, Romanae facundia, Maxime, linguae, Pont.*1.2.67), as well as stressing the power of speech, also highlights that particular skill which the poet requires Maximus to use on his behalf.[5] Often a flattering portrait reveals the author's wishes with regard to his addressee but we have very few glimpses from this one-sided correspondence of how the named recipient measures up to those wishes. While the inclusion of a name serves to personalize the letter, it is no sure representation of the person so named.

In Book 1 of the *Epistulae ex Ponto* we read the names of eight Romans and in Book 2 six new names are added while in Book 3 no new names are found.[6] Book 4 offers eight new names with only two, Brutus and Graecinus, familiar from Books 1-3.[7] When a name is repeated, our reading of the second letter is influenced by the tone and content of any previous letter and often our understanding or appreciation of the poems increases when

[5] The words emphasize that letters are a substitute for conversation when the speakers are separated by distance and the written word must be as persuasive as the eloquent tongue of a famous Roman orator. See my Chapter Two, page 85.

[6] In Book 1 we find these names: Brutus, Fabius Maximus, Rufinus, Cotta Maximus, Graecinus, Messalinus, Severus and Flaccus. The name Maximus is repeated (referring to Cotta Maximus, *Pont*. 1.5.2; 1.9.16) and one letter is addressed to his 'faithful wife', (*fidissima coniunx, Pont.* 1.4.45) who is never given a name. In Book 2 we find the names: Germanicus, Atticus, Salanus Cotys Macer and Rufus. There are also letters addressed to nameless friends and enemies (*Pont.* 3.6; 3.7; 4.3; 4.16). The arrangement of names in Book 3, beginning and ending with Brutus, coupled with the line 'later I collected them and joined them together without order, (*postmodo conlectas utcumque sine ordine iunxi, Pont.* 3. 9. 53), indicates that the first three books were considered by their author as one unit. The eight new names of Book 4: Sextus Pompey, Vestalis, Suillius, Albinovanus, Gallio, Tutucanus, and Carus.

[7] Syme, R., *History in Ovid*, 1978, p. 78, considers that the new names in Book 4 reflect a 'change of approach on the part of the poet'.

they are read in conjunction. The repetition of names and resulting connection between poems which otherwise may have little in common can be found in three poems addressed to Graecinus. The first two, *ex Ponto* 1.6 and 2.6 form a pair as the second of the two seems to be in response to a reply received from the recipient of the first. The third, *ex Ponto* 4.9, indicates a further shift in the attitude of the poet toward the recipient of his letters. Graecinus, as he appears in *ex Ponto* 1.6 is a 'friend' (*amicus, Pont.* 1.6.13) and his 'character' (*mores, Pont.* 1.6.5) is described using fulsome language.[8] The flattering portrait of Graecinus, as well rounded man, a soldier with an interest in the liberal arts, is built into a double couplet which opens with 'the liberal arts' (*artibus ingenuis, Pont*. 1.6.7) and closes with 'the duty and work of a soldier' (*officium militiaeque labor, Pont.* 1.6.10).

> artibus ingenuis, quarum tibi maxima cura est,
> pectora mollescunt asperitasque fugit;
> nec quisquam meliore fide complectitur illas,
> qua sinit officium militiaeque labor. (*Pont.* 1.6.7-10)
>
> With the liberal arts, for which you have the greatest concern, hearts soften and harshness flees, nor does anybody embrace them with better fidelity, as far as duty and the work of a soldier allows.

The poet makes reference, when addressing Graecinus, to the sign of a cultured man, an interest in 'literary pursuits' (*studiis, Pont.* 1.6.6) and the 'liberal arts' (*artibus ingenuis, Pont.* 1.6.7) but this is qualified with 'as far as the duty and work of a soldier allows' (*qua sinit officium militiaeque labor, Pont* 1.6.10). This restriction, along with the opening acknowledgement of Graecinus' absence 'for a different land was holding you' (*nam te*

[8] With this reference the poet claims Graecinus as 'friend' while other uses of the word position the poet as 'a friend who does not lie' (*non mendaci … amico, Pont.* 1.6.19) and an 'old friend' (*ueteri … amico, Pont.* 1.6.53) of Graecinus. The poet uses negative imagery to stress the positive character traits of Graecinus: 'Hateful savagery falls not into that character of yours, and nor does it disagree less with your literary pursuits' (*non cadit in mores feritas inamabilis istos / nec minus a studiis dissidet illa tuis Pont.* 1.6.5-6).

diuersa tenebat / terra, Pont. 1.6.1-2) and the military term for 'protection' (*praesidium, Pont.* 1.6.14) all give a picture of a Roman soldier, often absent on campaign, who is sympathetic to the arts. It is also self-referential through the first word 'arts' which could allude to his earlier work *Ars Amatoria*. From the blending of tender words used in love elegy, 'hearts soften' (*pectora mollescunt, Pont.* 1.6.8) and 'embrace' (*complectitur, Pont.* 1.6.9) with 'the duty and work of a soldier' (*officium militiaeque labor, Pont.* 1.6.10) the reader can also detect an allusion to his *Amores* 1.9 and 3.8. Emphasis is always on the writer in the exile letters and it is through self-referential passages such as this, that writer reminds his reader of his fame as a poet, identifying closely with his poetry, as this is the only way he can feel close to his friends in Rome. Flattery of the recipient, as a form of self-fulfilling prophecy or wishful thinking, adds weight to the poet's appeal for assistance. The type of person portrayed is one likely to help with petitions to the emperor to change the poet's place of exile.

The portrait, however, is ambiguous from the very beginning due to the question asked: 'Is it true that when you heard my case … your heart was sad? (*ecquid ut audisti … / meos casus, cor tibi triste fuit? Pont.* 1.6.1-2) and the use of a conditional clause: 'if I know you well, it is clear that your heart was sad' (*si bene te noui, triste fuisse liquet, Pont.* 1.6.4). 'If' (*si*) coupled with 'it is clear' (*liquet*) seems to imply irony as the impersonal *liquet* is not often used by Ovid.[9] It is found twice in this poem (*Pont.* 1.6.4 and 50) the second occurrence, 'and may I lie entombed in the sands of Tomis if it is not clear that you pray for me' (*inque Tomitana iaceam tumulatus harena / si te non nobis ista uouere liquet, Pont.* 1.6.49-50), magnifies the pathos of the poet's appeal to Graecinus through the

[9] *Am.* 2.5.24; *Met.* 14.842; *Tr.* 1.1.62; 3.3.27; 4.7.11; 5.13.19; *Pont.* 1.6.4, 50; 2.7.17.

obligations of friendship. The name, Tomis, suggests the poet's great distance from Rome and the Roman horror of dying in a foreign place is embedded in this condition of impossibility.

Letters are always speculative due to absence and distance and are written in terms of the 'absent presence'[10] of the poet. There is no way for the poet to know how the distant recipient will react to his requests and for this reason the correct response, from the exiled poet's point of view, is often scripted into the letter. In exile the poet feels his absence from Rome and in *ex Pont.*1.6, absence and distance form a theme which permeates the poem. When the poet was first told of his relegation, according to this poem, Graecinus was away in a 'different land'(*diuersa ... / terra, Pont.* 1.6.1-2). The poet goes on to say that he lacked the protection and consolation of a friend 'because you, my friend, were absent' (*quod amicus abbesses, Pont.* 1.6.13) and 'with you then, the consolations of a sick mind …were absent' (*tecum tunc aberant aegrae solacia mentis, Pont.* 1.6.15). After his relegation to Tomis, he is the one who is absent from Rome and now the poet needs Graecinus to send help over this distance, evident when he writes 'but now, as for that, bring one kind of help from a distance, I pray, and with your words of encouragement help my heart' (*at nunc, quod superest, fer opem precor, eminus unam / adloquioque iuua pectora nostra tuo, Pont.* 1.6.17-18). As a result of this distance the portrait of the recipient is couched in terms of wishes and hopes. Indeed, in this letter to Graecinus, the poet inserts twenty lines about the consolation and help brought to those suffering by personified Hope (*Spes, Pont.* 1.6.27). The poet refers to hope in each couplet, often as 'this goddess (*haec*

[10] Hardie, Philip, *Ovid's Poetics of Illusion*, Cambridge, 2002, p. 313, who writes at length on this subject says: 'Ovid constitutes his exilic persona very much as an absent presence'.

dea, Pont. 1.6.29, 39) and this segment opens and closes with ‘hope’ (*spes Pont.* 1.6.27, 46) in close proximity with the name of Graecinus, (*Graecine, Pont.* 1.6.27, 47) which accentuates to what degree the persona of the recipient as a cultured soldier and sympathetic friend, is speculative and wishful.

What we learn about Graecinus from the first poem addressed to him in the *Epistulae ex Ponto* is expanded very little in the second (*Pont.* 2.6). The recipient, Graecinus, shows up as a constructed persona when we note that the almost obsequious flattery in *ex Ponto* 1.6 is dropped in the second letter to him. Where hope for help despite distance is the theme of *ex Ponto* 1.6, the second poem to Graecinus, *ex Ponto* 2.6, concentrates on the effect distance has on communication and stress is firmly fixed on the poet. Because the poet is so far from Rome and his friends, writing and letters must substitute for face to face conversation. We seem to get another picture of the man behind the name as well as an insight into the poet and his compulsion to write.

> carmine Graecinum, qui praesens uoce solebat,
> tristis ab Euxinis Naso salutat aquis.
> exulis haec uox est: praebet mihi littera linguam
> et, si non liceat scribere, mutus ero.
> corripis, ut debes, stulti peccata sodalis
> et mala me meritis ferre minora doces.
> vera facis, sed sera meae conuicia culpae:
> aspera confesso uerba remitte reo. (*Pont*. 2.6.1-8)
>
> With verses, which he was accustomed to voice in person, sad Naso greets you, Graecinus, from the Euxine waters. This is the voice of an exile. Letters give a tongue to me and if to write is not permitted I will be made dumb. You reprove, as you ought, the mistakes of your stupid companion and misfortunes, less than my deserts, you teach me to bear. You are right, but you make protest of my fault too late; give up sharp words for an acknowledged culprit.

The contrast between writing and speaking caused by distance is established in the opening couplet by the juxtaposition of ‘verse’ and ‘voice’ and by reference to a foreign-sounding

location, 'the Euxine Waters'.[11] The second couplet reinforces the sentiments: the poet, because of his relegation from Rome, must use letters as a tongue or verses instead of voiced greetings. The replacement of speech with writing is evident in an earlier reference in the exile poems to the poet's tongue, 'so now our letters bring and return our silent voices and paper and hands complete the functions of the tongue (*sic ferat ac referat tacitas nunc littera voces / et peragant linguae charta manusque vices. Tr.* 5.13.29-30). At *ex Ponto* 1.7 the poet is equally specific: 'letters instead of spoken words, Messalinus, have brought you greetings which you read, all the way from the fierce Getae' (*littera pro uerbis tibi, Messaline, salutem / quam legis, a saeuis attulit usque Getis, Pont.* 1.7.1-2). Writing is speech over distance and the presence of the writer is reduced to the written word and signs or symbols as the poet asks the recipients of his letters to guess the source of communication. The symbols by which the original letter may have been recognized, the handwriting and the seal or mark of the poet's ring are, of course, absent from the printed text we read, and would also have been absent from published texts in Rome as well as from voiced or recited poetry.[12] If disbelief is suspended to allow for this, then it is also suspended regarding the persona of the poet and we accept that the poetry is the voice of Ovid and his published verses become the poet's voice heard in Rome.

[11] With almost the same words the poet expresses similar sentiments: 'To you, Cotta Maximus, to whom he would rather offer it face to face, he sends a greeting from the land of the hairy Getae' (*qui tibi, quam mallet praesens adferre salutem / mittit ab hirsutis, Maxime Cotta, Getis. Pont.* 3.5.5-6).

[12] The poet writes 'If the ring is not an informant of its own author, do you not recognize the letters formed by my hand? (*auctorisque sui si non est annulus index, / cognitane est nostra littera facta manu, Pont.* 2.10.3-4). He has played with this idea in an earlier poem when he explains why his wife might not recognize the writing: 'If you wonder why this letter of mine should be written by another's fingers, I was sick' (*haec mea si casu miraris epistula quare / alterius digitis scripta sit, aeger eram, Tr.*3.3.1-2). The poet often suggests that his work can be recognized easily: by the place of origin, *Pont.* 3.5; while the wax is unbroken, *Pont.*3.7 and by the style of writing, *Pont.* 4.8. See Chapter Two above, pp.74-5.

The poet names himself Naso, in this poem, and names his status as exile so blending person and persona. As well as explaining why he writes, the opening of this poem could serve as a warning to the recipient that, although exiled, the poet's voice will still be heard by a wide audience in Rome. We do not know just how wide an audience heard them, but the poems presumably circulated among the group of poets and their friends in Rome with enough copies made to ensure their survival.

Although the language is similar in the two poems, *ex Ponto* 1.6 and 2.6, with reference to friendship, the poet's fault or error, and the use of shipwreck imagery,[13] the tone of the second of the pair is quite different. That this poem is in reply to a letter received from Graecinus is indicated by the 2nd person verbs, 'you reprove' (*corripis, Pont.* 2.6.5) 'you teach' (*doces, Pont.* 2.6.6) and 'you are right' (*vera facis, Pont.* 2.6.7).[14] These words show that Graecinus has responded to the poet's first letter *ex Ponto* 1.6 with disapproval and not the sympathetic help requested. The recipient has not lived up to the expectations scripted into 'the perfect friend' persona of the first letter. As we do not have the letter Graecinus sent, the idea of the recipient's adverse response could be seen as a technique or mechanism used by the poet to add realism to an artfully constructed poem in the same way that many readers see the actions and response of the mistress-persona as constructed and written into love elegy. The change in tone in this letter to Graecinus, whether artificially constructed or not, shows the poet responding as if his first letter has elicited a

[13] The word for friend refers to both Graecinus and the poet in both poems: *amicus, amicum Pont.*1.6.13, 2.6.23: (but note also *sodalis, Pont.* 2.6.5) a*mico, Pont.* 1.6.19, 53, and 2.6.19, 29. The poet is 'stupid' in both: *stulta, Pont.* 1.6.20; *stulti, Pont.* 2.6.5. The poet's fault or error is *peccati, Pont.*1.6.21; *peccata, Pont.* 2.6.5 or *culpa, Pont.* 1.6.25, 26; *cuplae, Pont.* 2.6.7. The word for 'shipwreck' *naufragio*, is used in both poems, *Pont.* 1.6.34 and 2.6.11.

[14] The poet makes reference to the receipt of letters and gifts in other poems: *Pont.* 1.3.1; 1.9.1; 2.2; 2.8; 3.5; 3.9; 4.2; 4.8; 4.11.

less than favourable reply. The poet shows his displeasure by pointing out the poor timing of Graecinus' reproof as well as condemning him, with a repetition of the emotionally charged word 'shameful' (*turpe, Pont.* 2.6.19, 21, 22, 23) as one who denies a friend 'except he be lucky' (*nisi sit felix, Pont.* 2.6.24).

The emphasis in *ex Ponto* 2.6 is on the writer as a poet, and the ability of poets to make names famous in literature. This is a theme common to many poems and the poet has referred earlier to the power of his poetry and the fame of the poet which attaches to those about whom the poet writes when he says of his wife: 'Great is the persona imposed on you by my books, you are said to be the exemplar of a good wife' (*magna tibi imposita est nostris persona libellis / coniugis exemplum diceris esse bonae, Pont.* 3.1.43-4).[15] Famous names also add lustre to his own poetry: when he writes, 'I bear the sacred name of the Julian race' (*gentis Iuleae nomina sancta fero, Pont.* 1.1.46) the poet acknowledges this and also reinforces the fusion between himself and his work. By citing famous friends in literature, Pirithous and Theseus, Pylades and Orestes, 'those whom the past age has admired, and the following age will admire' (*quos prior est mirata, sequens mirabitur aetas, Pont.* 2.6.26)[16] the poet reminds Graecinus that his name will also reach the public.

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[15] In much of his work the poet indicates that his poetry confers lasting fame on the people he names, for example in *Amores* 3.12 it his books of verse which make the lover's mistress, Corinna, well known. In the *Epistulae ex Ponto*, in a verse to Maximus dedicated to Celsus on his death he writes: 'rightly do I bestow verses bearing witness to a rare character, that those about to come may read your name Celsus' (*carmina iure damus raros testantia mores / ut tua uenturi nomina, Celse, legant. Pont.* 1.9.43-4); to Graecinus: 'believe me, if my song is not about to die, you shall be frequently on posterity's lips' (*crede mihi, nostrum si non mortale futurum est / carmen, in ore frequens posteritatis eris. Pont.* 2.6.33-4); to a faithless unnamed friend: 'I will not employ your name lest my complaint bring you favour and through my verse you win renown' (*nominee non utar, ne commendere querella, / quaeraturque tibi carmine fama meo, Pont.* 4.2.3-4); to Vestalis: 'Aegisos is conquered, and for all time, Vestalis, my song bears witness to your deeds'. (*uincitur Aegisos, testataque tempus in omne / sunt tua Vestalis, carmine facta meo. Pont.* 4.7.53-4); and to Sullius he writes: 'by verse virtue lives on, and, avoiding the tomb, becomes known to late posterity' (*carmine fix uiuax uirtus, expersque sepulchri / notitiam serae posteritatis habet. Pont.* 4.8.47-8).

[16] The common theme of friendship and fame, which runs through out the exile poems is often illustrated by reference to famous pairs of friends, Orestes and Pylades, *Tr.* 1.5.21, 22; 1.9.28, 29; 4.4.69, 87; *Pont.* 2.3.45; 3.2.69, 70, 85, 87. and Theseus and Pirithous, *Tr.* 1.5.19, 20; 1.9.31, *Pont.* 2.3.43; 3.2.33; 4.10.78.

A greater audience will be made aware of Graecinus regarding the obligations of friendship and the name will identify one individual who could have done more to help the banished poet.

From his emphasis on writing as speech we see that the poet is concerned that his voice should continue to be heard in Rome in spite of his exile. By soliciting help, sympathy and support from a variety of influential friends by name, the poet hopes to keep his position and his voice heard in the society from which he is banished. The poet acknowledges, by language he uses, that the opposite of speech is silence and his use of 'I will be made dumb' (*mutus ero, Pont.* 1.10.4)[17] accentuates his concern. If the poet was relegated in order to silence the popular voice of an irreverent or frivolous poet in a Rome whose emperor is concerned about moral laxity, this concern is well founded. In *ex Ponto* 2.6 the poet shows that his requests for help have not been heard or understood as he chides Graecinus for his unhelpful response.

The condemnation of Graecinus' response as 'shameful' is tempered with flattery in a repetition of 'you are worthy' (*dignus es, Pont*. 2.6.30 and 31) but the language used modifies the praise when the poet writes: 'you are worthy, and since you have merited praise with your devotion, my gratitude of your duty will not fall on deaf ears' (*dignus es, et, quoniam laudem pietate mereris / non erit officii gratia surda tui, Pont.* 2.6.31-2). The

[17] The poet will be 'made dumb' (*mutus, Pont* 2.6.4) if he cannot write. The word *mutus* in close proximity with the word for tongue (*linguam, Pont.* 2.6.3) cannot fail to evoke the story told about the Goddess Muta (*Fasti* 2.583) and the silencing of Lara by removing her tongue when she warned Juturna of the lustful designs of Jupiter, (*Fasti*, 2.483-616) as well as the 'speechless lips' (*os mutum, Met.* 6.574) of the ravaged Philomela who threatened to tell of Tereus' treachery. In both these stories the reader's sympathy lies with the silenced victim and this sympathy easily carries over to the poet as victim, in danger of being silenced by exile. See Chapter Two, p. 75 and Farrell, J., 'Reading and writing the *Heroides*', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 98, 307-38, 1998, on the subject of speech and silence.

use of the word *pietate* to describe that which merits praise, set beside *officii* as that which gets the poet's gratitude strikes an odd note; something is not quite as it seems and this is reinforced by the use of the word *surda*. Does the poet mean that there could be more than meets the eye (or ear) about Graecinus in this passage? Can a 'not deaf' reader 'hear' more about the sort of help given by Graecinus? Either way, the poet offers Graecinus the reward of fame, or at least that he will be talked about, 'you shall often be on the lips of posterity' (*in ore frequens posteritatis eris, Pont.* 2.6.34) if he continues to 'help' and the final couplet shows that the poet is not above goading the recipient of his letter.

> quae tu cum praestes, remo tamen utor in aura,
> nec nocet admisso subdere calcar equo. (*Pont.* 2.6.36-7)
>
> Although you provide what you do, yet I use oars in the wind, nor does it harm to put the spur under a galloping horse.

There is a further change in tone in *ex Ponto* 4.9, however, and the poet gives a much more deferential picture of his friend on the occasion of Graecinus' inauguration as consul. Historical detail undermines the reading of Graecinus as a persona. The frank language of friendship, which permits both praise and blame, is absent in this letter. Graecinus has now moved into official circles which require suitable language, more formal or deferential and the recipient of this letter is portrayed as an influential and civilized Roman. In his *History in Ovid*, Syme (1978) writes that C. Pomponius Graecinus, brother to L Pomponius Flaccus, was a 'new man' *nouus homo* 'from Iguvium in Umbria, probably Ovid's junior by a number of years'.[18] No censure is evident in this last letter to Graecinus and this poem could signal new hope in the poet for more effective help from a friend who now has a

[18] Syme, R., *History in Ovid*, 1978, p. 74, 180. Brothers, although nameless, are mentioned in the second poem to Graecinus, *Pont.* 2.6.16, but it is not untill *Pont.* 4.9, that Flaccus and Graecinus are named as the brothers under discussion. In a poem to Flaccus the poet also makes reference to a brother, without using a name, *Pont.* 1.10.37.

higher status in Roman society. Similarities of language occur in all three poems: the notion of friendship (*Pont.* 1.6.13; 2.6.23; 4.9.7, 35), writing in place of speech and tongue (*Pont.* 2.6.3 and 4.9.11), fate or Fortune (*Pont.* 1.6.13, 54; 2.6.23; 4.9.11, 32, 90, 121), and requests for prayers to soften the wrath of the emperor (*Pont.* 1.6.47-8; 2.6.15-18; 4.9.51-54). Distance and exile are still prominent themes as this greeting is sent as a surrogate for the poet himself who must write the greeting that he would like to give in person.[19]

Events such as consulships and triumphs are used to date poems as the names attached to them are also to be found outside the poem. The response to events by named individuals is evoked by the writer but is always speculative due to the distance separating the poet from his area of interest. Styled as the workings of memory, imagination or speculation, the events portrayed are often filled with allusion to literature and the poet himself rather than the recipient. In a slightly defiant tone he states that, 'using my mind, which alone is not exiled from its place' (*mente, tamen, quae sola loco non exulat utar, Pont*. 4.9.41)[20] he

[19] In the second poem sent to Sextus Pompey on the occasion of his consulship, it is the 'light elegies' (*leues elegi*, *Pont.* 4.5.1) which go in the place of the poet: this is reminiscent of the 'little book' (*parue …liber, Tr.* 1.1.1) sent to the city instead of its author.

[20] I think that the poet's tone is carefully defiant in this letter to Graecinus, *Pont.* 4.9, because of an emphasis on what is 'allowed' (*licet*, *Pont.* 4.9.1, 55, 69, and 111) and the poet's reference and appeal to Augustus by name (*Pont.* 4.9.70) rather than to Tiberius, when by this time Augustus is dead. It is useful to read *Pont.* 4.9 (to Graecinus) in conjunction with *Pont.* 4.4 (to Sextus Pompey) as both describe the inauguration of a consul in similar terms and tone. Helzle, Martin, *Publii Ovidii Nasonis Epistularum ex Ponto liber IV*, Zurich, New York, 1989, pp. 105-7, writing about the letter to Sextus Pompey on his consulship (*Pont.* 4.4) points out: 'this epistle bears some resemblance to a few letters which Cicero wrote to consuls… [where] Cicero stresses the public character of a letter to the consul' and cites Cic. *Fam.* XV 7-13. He goes on to say 'Ovid may be demonstrating his loyalty to the régime by presenting what reads like the official version of the *status quo* in Rome'. Helzle may be able to read *Pont.* 4.4, in this way but I cannot, especially when it is read coupled with *Pont.* 4.9, both poems can be read to show a defiant exiled poet. See Henderson, J., 'Not Wavering but Frowning: Ovid as Isopleth (*Tristia* 1 through 10)', *Ramus*, 26: 139-171, 1997 on the defiant poet.

can visualize the ritual of a consul's inauguration.[21] The poet wishes that he might see what his mind imagines:

> hic ego praesentes inter numerarer amicos,
> mitia ius Urbis si modo fata darent,
> quaeque mihi sola capitur nunc mente uoluptas,
> tunc oculis etiam percipienda foret. (*Pont.* 4.9.35-8)
>
> There, I should be numbered among your immediate friends, if only gentle fates might give me a right to the city and the pleasure which is now being caught by my mind alone then would be perceived with my eyes also.

The poem is a rich evocation of this important day, of the signs and symbols of power and position. Since Graecinus is a soldier, the poet uses military language to describe the ranks of people in procession (*agminis ordo, Pont.* 4.9.23) and diminishes his own importance as 'squeezed out by the mob' (*turba quamuis eliderer, Pont.* 4.9.21) in order to make much of the honour accorded to the new consul. The description contains the usual elements of this ritual, the procession, the prayers and the new consul's speech in the senate as well as the ritual sacrifice of cattle.[22] The poet has written a similar description in *ex Ponto* 4.4.25-42, in which the poet imagines the ceremony where Sextus Pompey 'will clothe himself with the purple of highest honour' (*purpura Pompeium summi uelabit honoris, Pont.* 4.4.25)[23] and also at the beginning of his *Fasti* 1.71-88, as this ceremony takes place in January, the first month celebrated in this work. Consulship confers high honour and status and the poet makes a direct appeal to the now influential Graecinus.[24] The poet begs Graecinus to pray

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[21] See also where the poet's mind is allowed to travel to Rome to 'see' a triumph, *Tr.* 4.2.57-67; where with the power of a god, the poet prophesies a triumph in all its detail, *Pont.* 3.4; and where the poet writes 'because it is allowed, I will look, as I can with my mind, at an absent friend' (*quod licet, absentem qua possum mente uidebo, Pont.* 4.4.45).

[22] Livy, XXI.63.7 and 13-15, describes such a sacrifice, but one which goes wrong, giving a bad omen for the consulship. Foster, B.O., (tr) *Livy, Books XXI-XXII*, Cambridge, Mass., 1969, pp. 189-93.

[23] Purple, of course, refers to the *toga praetexta*, the garment of office worn by senior magistrates with its wide purple border, both here at *Pont.* 4.9.26 and at *Pont.* 4.4.25..

[24] The letters of Cicero to his friends on the occasion of their consulship also make appeals that should be able to be granted through the powers of this higher office, *Fam.* XV 7-13. Williams, W.Glynn., (tr) *Cicero, The letters to his Friends, III*, Cambridge, Mass., 1965, pp.270-85.

while making ritual prayers and sacrifice that the 'wrath of the princeps' (*principis ira, Pont.* 4.9.52) be calmed.[25] As Graecinus' brother is also to be made consul, the honour and power are doubled in that family and the poet, with repetition and ostentatious language offers gross flattery to them both.[26] He begins the passage with the name of Graecinus (*Graecine, Pont.* 4.9.59) and ends it with that of Flaccus (*Flaccoque, Pont.* 4.9.69) together with Augustus (*Augusti, Pont.* 4.9.70). A reference to Augustus by name, a commonplace among such words of prestige and power, nonetheless serves to arrest the attention of the reader as we gain the impression that Augustus was the 'author' (*auctoris, Pont.* 4.9.67) and the 'one giving' (*dantis, Pont.* 4.9.68)[27] of these honours, even though the event is dated two years after his death.[28] Time is blurred for the exiled poet and this is evident when he writes to Graecinus that Flaccus was commander in the region 'just now' (*modo, Pont.* 4.9.75)[29] and distance is also understated with events, described as occurring 'here' happening miles away, geographically, from Tomis. The named places, Moesia and Troesmis, are close to the poet only by association: they, with Tomis, are on the very edge

[25] The poet uses this expression to refer to the reason for his relegation many times, beginning in the first poem of *Tristia*, see *Tr.* 1.1.33. See also *Tr.* 4.10.98; 5.11.8; *Pont.* 1.4.49; 1.6.44 and 2.7.79 where the '*Princeps*' is Augustus. By the date of the consulship of Graecinus and Flaccus, Augustus is dead and the '*Princeps*' must now be Tiberius. In a similar way and more frequently the poet refers to the 'wrath of Caesar (*Caesaris irae, Tr.* 2.1). This formula occurs 17 times in *Tristia* and 18 times in *ex Ponto.*

[26] He uses 'twice consul' (*bis consul, Pont.* 4.9.63) twice in one line followed by 'double honour' (*binus … honor, Pont.* 4.9.64); he uses hyperbole when he writes 'Mars' Rome sees no power greater than Consul' (*…nullum Martia summon / altius imperium consule Roma uidet, Pont.* 4.9.65-6); he repeats words for power (*imperium, Pont.* 4.9.60, 66) honour, (*honor, Pont.* 4.9.34, 62, 67) and varies the word for 'dignity' (*grauitas, Pont.* 4.9.66 and *maiestatem, Pont.* 4.9.67).

[27] It is feasible that Augustus could have nominated them both for consul before he died and that line 71 could be addressed to Augustus, as a god: '…because he will be free from his own cares of the state' (*quod tame nab rerum cura propriore uacabit, Pont.* 4.9.71). It is unlikely that the poet refers to Tiberius by the name Augustus because elsewhere Tiberius is only named as 'Caesar' (*Pont.* 4.9.125). Reference is made to Augustus as a god on two other occasions in this poem: when the poet refers to the shrine he has made in exile to the imperial family (*Pont.* 4.9.105-108) and when he suggests that his poems and prayers are known to Caesar, a new god (*Pont.* 4.9.127-132).

[28] This poem is dated 16CE by Syme, R., *History in Ovid*, 1978, p. 43, who writes that 'C Pomponius Graecinus became suffect consul on July 1 with C. Vibius Rufus for collegue'.

[29] Syme, R., *History in Ovid*, 1978, p. 83, n. 3, dates the poem by the consulships of Graecinus and Flaccus as the year 16 and the activity of Flaccus in the region of Moesia and Troesmis as the year 12 and notes that 'the recapture of Troesmis is generally put in 15'. He cites this poem as evidence.

of the known world and also share the same long river.[30] Place names emphasize the poet's foreign location while the names of Graecinus and Flaccus combined with a vivid description of the trappings of civilization (ritual sacrifice, procession, the badges of office in the form of robes and chair, and activities such as giving laws to the people), set up a contrast between where the poet writes and where he wishes to be. In spite of this historical detail, the recipient of this letter, as in *ex Ponto* 1.6 seems to be a constructed persona, that of an influential and civilized Roman. The brother Flaccus is portrayed as an honest Roman soldier who would be a reliable witness to the poet's claims about the climate and the dangers he faces in exile. We learn very little about Flaccus from this poem, except that he has been a commander in the region battling the barbarian Moesi and Getae and that he can vouch for the poet's reputation in a region, 'where the barbarian enemy makes it that uncivilized weapons are more powerful than laws' (*ubi barbarus hostis / ut fera plus ualeant legibus arma facit, Pont.* 4.9.93-4). The use of the name of a well known soldier gives the illusion of another point of view besides that of the poet. The land and people are also conjured up in this way to bear witness to the poet's fame, piety and high standing in the region.[31]

The name of Graecinus' brother Flaccus in a letter addressed to Graecinus (*ex Ponto* 4.9) encourages us to read an earlier letter addressed directly to Flaccus, *ex Ponto* 1.10, in order to learn more about the people to whom Ovid writes. In *ex Ponto* 1.10, the poet seems to

[30] There are textual difficulties inherent in the transmission of these ancient place names. However, the words then, as now, are used to imply the barbarous edges of the known world through their foreign sounding syllables rather than to name a specific place.

[31] In *ex Ponto* 4.14 addressed to Tuticanus, reference is made to his popularity as a poet (*Pont.* 4.14.55) and his exemption from taxes (*Pont.* 4.14.15). The poet also indicates that the people among whom he lives complain about him slandering both the land and people so he takes pains to draw a distinction between the two.

have followed up his first request to Graecinus with a letter to another member of the same family, namely Flaccus. As in *ex Ponto* 1.6 the name is used only once and no details of character are given; the poet seems content to portray the recipient as a sympathetic friend who knows the poet well, someone who, with his brother, could bring help to an exiled poet. There is no evidence, external to these poems, for a close friendship between the poet and the named recipient. Although Flaccus is well known in Roman society, it is through kinship with the poet's friend Graecinus that the approach is made.

This poem takes the subjectivity of the letter form to extremes as emphasis is firmly on the poet whose name, Naso, is the first word of the poem. The physical symptoms of the poet's state of health are the focus, introduced with a play on the greeting word 'good health' (*salutem, Pont.* 1.10.1) as a variation of the formulaic opening of a letter. Because the poems in *Epistulae ex Ponto* are all letters, the word, *salutem*, is often used in a general way with no special emphasis, but here and in a few other poems it is stressed to accentuate the state of health of either the sender or the recipient.[32] Because of the distance from Rome, the poet intensifies the meaning of common words. A written greeting, without the visual and audible clues of gestures, facial expression and tone of voice available in a face to face greeting, must depend on linguistic tricks or word play as well as literary allusion to catch and hold the attention of its reader. While all letters refer in some way to the well-being of the recipient and the sender, this poem is unusual for its graphic description of the bodily ills of the letter writer.

[32] For formulaic or general use of *salutem* see *Pont.*1.3.1; 1.7.1; 1.8.1; 2.2.3; 3.5.5; 4.9.1; 4.13.3. See *ex Ponto* 4.13.49; 4.15.3, 41 and also *Tristia* 5.13.1 where there is a similar play on 'farewell' or 'be in good health' (*vale Tr.* 5.13.34). See *ex Ponto* 2.5.2; 3.2.1; 3.4.1, for reference to the 'health' of the recipient. Ovid often refers to his state in exile as sickness: *Tr.* 3.3.1-2; *Pont.* 1.6.15. See my Chapter Two, p. 60, note 10.

Allusion to signs of ill health is not uncommon in elegy as the subject of many love poems is the pale and sleepless lover. Love as disease is a trope in ancient literature and the ailing lover is often found in Greek tragedy.[33] The lovesick poet can be also found in the poems of Catullus, especially Poem 76 where the poet/lover asks the gods to end his suffering: 'and tear away from me this destructive disease' (*eripite hanc pestem perniciemque mihi,* 76.20).[34] Forceful or surgical removal of disease is suggested in the word 'tear away' (*eripite*, 76.20) and Propertius echoes Catullus when the poet/lover says he will 'bravely submit to the knife and savage fires' (*fortiter et ferrum saeuos patietmur et ignes,* 1.26) to obtain help for 'a heart not healthy' (*non sani pectoris,* 1.1.25). Ovid follows the tradition and portrays an ailing poet/lover in his *Amores,* as 'wretched' (*miserum, Am.* 1.1.25) and one who has a 'wound' (*uulnus, Am*. 1.2.29). In addition to this his *Remedia Amoris* is a didactic work completely devoted to the subject of cures for the wounds of love and in this poem the reader is urged to 'learn to be healed' (*discite sanari, R.A.* 43). The poem is dedicated to Phoebus Apollo, guardian of both 'song and healing' (*carminis et medicae ... opis, R.A.* 76). Love is shown as an external force, acting on the helpless lover and causing physical symptoms of ill health and suffering.

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[33] In Greek tragedy we find Phaedra ill from love in Euripides' *Hippolytus* and Alcestis dying for love in Euripides' *Alcestis* to name just two. See also Catullus 76; Propertius 1.1; and Ovid's *Amores* 1.2 and *Remedia Amoris*. Links are found between Propertius 1.1 and Ovid's *Remedia Amoris* when mention is made of healing through surgery or cauterization: Propertius writes: 'I shall bravely suffer the knife and savage fire' (*fortitier et ferrum saeuos patiemur et ignes,* 1.1.27) and Ovid writes: 'to cure the body, you would suffer the knife and fire' (*ut corpus redimas, ferrum pateris et ignes, R.A.* 229).

[34]Quinn, Kenneth, *Catullus, The Poems,* London, 1970, p. 406, writing about poem 76 says that it is 'regarded by many as the prototype of Latin love elegy'. See also Catullus poem 72 where the lover refers to unrequited love as 'such hurt' (*iniuria talis,* 72.6) and sums up the problem of cause and effect in a couplet in poem 85. He gives the cause 'I hate and love' (*odi et amo,* 85.1) and the result 'I am tortured' (*excrucior,* 85.2) which picks up 'you torture' (*excrucies,* 76.10) in poem 76.

In the *Epistulae ex Ponto* the poet often refers to the deleterious effects he suffers to mind and body: now his suffering is caused not by love, but by his condition of exile and the cold and foreign place he inhabits. It is in *ex Ponto* 1.10 that the most detailed description is found of how this suffering manifests in his body. Physical symptoms of what today might be diagnosed as cancer or profound depression are listed: lassitude (*languor, Pont.* 1.10.4), aversion to hateful food (*fastidia ... inuisi cibi, Pont.* 1.10.7-8), poor digestion ('the weight will stand for a long while in my inactive stomach' *stabit et in stomacho pondus inerte diu, Pont.* 1.10.14), sleeplessness ('I am wakeful' *uigilo, Pont.* 1.10.23), weight loss ('thin body' *exiles … artus, Pont.* 1.10.27) and pallor ('my limbs are paler than new wax' *membraque sunt cera pallidiora noua, Pont.* 1.10.28). These conditions are recognizable as indicators of serious illness. Although the poet admits that he has none of the signs of acute ill-health, neither pain (*nec dolor, Pont.* 1.10.5) nor does he burn with panting fever (*febribus ... anhelis, Pont*. 1.10.5) and his pulse is normal, 'and my vein completes the journey of its usual movement' (*et peragit soliti uena tenoris iter. Pont.* 1.10.6) the poet's depiction of his state of bodily health is subjective and immediate. To stress how he suffers lassitude and loss of appetite, he writes that nothing tempts his jaded palate, that even nectar and ambrosia given by a goddess would not tempt him.

As an exiled poet, dependent on the written word to convey his thoughts and feelings, he is aware that his words could be misconstrued as 'whims or fastidiousness' (*delicias, Pont*. 1.10.16) and turns this into a threat or curse when he suggests that anyone who reads his words this way should experience the same 'whims' as he does. The poet acknowledges that his situation in exile is so far outside the known experience of the recipient of his letter

that his words could be misinterpreted as the affected mannerisms of a literary persona but his threat undercuts that assumption and blurs the distinction between persona and poet.

Ovid writes about the effect of sleeplessness on his 'insubstantial body' (*corpus inane*, *Pont*. 1.10.22) and the choice of adjective emphasizes the deathlike state of exile. The word 'body' *corpus* is found three times in this poem: *Pont*. 1.10.3, 22, and 23 and, as always, contains a second meaning of 'body of work'. For a poet it is generally good to be 'wakeful' (v*igilo*, *Pont.* 1.10.23), to labour through the night to produce good poetry but in exile the poet goes without sleep because he is anxious and afraid.[35] It is through the ambiguity of words like these that the poet creates a fusion between himself and his work. This is particularly evident when he writes:

> uix igitur possis uisos agnoscere uultus
> quoque ierit quaeras qui fuit ante color.
> paruus in exiles sucus mihi peruenit artus
> membraque sunt cera pallidiora noua. (*Pont*. 25-28)
>
> Scarcely, therefore, would you be able to recognize my face having seen it, and you would ask where that colour, which was mine before, has gone. Little sap comes to my thin body and my limbs are paler than new wax.

[35] In *Tristia* 1.1 the poet's use of the word 'wakefulness' (*evigilauit*) aligns him with the great poets by claiming the same 'wakeful' skill. In epigram 29, Callimichus refers to the 'subtle discourses and earnest vigil (*agrupniê*) of Aratus, with regard to his aetological work, *Phaenomena.* Mair, A.W., (tr) *Callimachus, Hymns and Epigrams*, Cambridge, Mass., 1977, p.156-7. The idea of labouring through the night to produce good poetry is somewhat undercut by the thought that the only way to observe the stars and their courses is by night. Lucretius refers to the same idea when he writes that he is ready to labour and to spend wakeful nights to make hidden things clear through words and poetry (*D.R.N.* 1.142). Modern critics also draw attention to the word *vigilare*: Hinds, S., 'After Exile: Time and Teleology from *Metamorphoses* to *Ibis*', *Ovidian Transformations: Essays on the Metamorphoses and its Reception*, P. Hardie, A. Barchiesi and S. Hinds, (eds) Cambridge, Supp. 23, 1999(b), p. 55 and n. 12 refers to Gale 1994, 107, n. 41: 'the references to *labor* and nocturnal cogitations [in Lucr. 1.141-2] recall Callamachus' praise of Aratus'. Williams, G.D., 'Representations of the Book-Roll in Latin Poetry: Ovid, *Tr.*1.1.3-14 and Related Texts', *Mnemosyne*, 45, 178-189, 1992, p. 179-80, n. 8, makes this point about Cinna, fr. 11, in his article and cites Ovid's use of the image of a wakeful poet/lover at *A.A.*2.285 and *Fasti*, 4.109.

The poet fears that he is unrecognizable through ill health and this brings to mind his ongoing concern that his poetry is forgotten because he is so far from Rome, that the recipient may lack the ability to recognize the distant writer when the only physical signs available are the seal, style or handwriting of a letter.[36] The poet uses an intriguing choice of words to describe his 'thin body' (*exilis … artus, Pont.* 1.10.27). It is easy to hear 'exile' and 'art' (*exul* and *ars*) in these words and this seems to be a deliberate attempt by the poet to merge with his work. In the pentameter, allusion is made to the poet's previous work with reference to the poet's tools of trade; the wax tablets on which letters and poems are written further fusing poet and poem.[37]

Such a vivid picture of ill health possibly alludes to a traditional literary depiction of the signs of plague, a subject the poet himself has tackled in his *Metamorphoses* 7.550ff. It is implied by the list of symptoms and the use of the word 'panting' (*anhelis, Pont* 1.10.5; *anhelitus, Met.* 7.555) and reference to 'fever' (*febribus, Pont.* 1.10.5; 'latent fire' *flammaeque latentis, Met.* 7.554). Similar images are found in Virgil's *Georgics* and Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*, which both depend on a detailed depiction by Thucydides of the plague of 430 BCE in Athens.[38] All these writers stress the powerlessness of the people

[36] The poet has expressed concern for recognition in a much earlier poem: 'nor, if you should see me suddenly, could you recognize me' (*nec, si me subito uideas, agnoscere possis, Pont.* 1.4.5)and also concern about his work being recognized. See also note 12 above.

[37] The poet has explored the connection between writing and wax tablets before. In his earlier work tablets play an important role in the life of the lover as they carry messages back and forth: (*tabellae*) *Amores* 1.11.6 and 1.12.1; *Ars Amatoria*, 1.37-8). Reference to new wax suggests unwritten tablets, tablets that are silent until inscribed by the poet or his mistress. It could foreshadow the poet's statement that if he cannot write he will be made dumb, *Pont*. 2.6.4. The word for 'limbs' *membra* often has an erotic component and reminds the reader of both the *Amores* (*membra*, 1.5.2) and *Ars Amatoria* (*membra*, A.A. 2.716).

[38] Virgil, in his *Georgics*, 3.478-514 gives the symptoms of the plague in animals as thirst, shriveled limbs, blackened tongue, madness and despair. He describes the effect of plague on cattle (*G.* 3.515-535) and although the cattle do not drink wine nor do they harm themselves with lavish banquets but, like the poet of *ex Ponto* 1.10. 29-36, they still suffer. Lucretius, 6.1145ff describes the plague in Athens and the physical symptoms of the disease. Based on Thucydides' account he mentions fever, black tongue, thirst and

and animals against the contagion and the poet in *ex Ponto* 1.10 also points out that his suffering is not as a result of a luxurious lifestyle. When he writes that he drinks little 'wine' (*Lyaeo, Pont*. 1.10.29) and is not burdened with 'banquets' (*epulis, Pont*. 1.10.31) the poet draws a comparison between himself and Virgil's hard working blameless bulls, who were not drinkers of 'wine' (*Bacchi, G*. 3.526) nor had they harmed their health by repeated 'banquets' (*epulae, G.* 3.527). A reference to wine, banquets and love, the 'pleasure of Venus' (*Veneris … uoluptas, Pont*. 1.10.33) suggests the poet's earlier persona of 'lover' who indulged in all three, and the 'teacher' persona who showed how these three were essential tools for capturing a girl. However, the poet in exile erases any earlier persona of lover and teacher by appealing to the reader's knowledge of his private life and habits and by the graphic description of his physical suffering.[39]

The cause of the poet's suffering is summed up with his usual complaint against the water and the place where he lives in exile, but with an added cause: anxiety of mind that none should remember or help him.[40] There are similarities between this poem and his letters to Flaccus' brother Graecinus: he mentions Caesar's wrath (*Pont.* 1.10.20, 42-3) to Flaccus and in his letter to Graecinus it is the Prince's wrath (*Pont.* 1.6.44, 4.9.52) which, according to personified Hope, can be turned by tears not blood. He requests help from both brothers in this letter to Flaccus and suggests, with an unusual shipwreck metaphor, that they will bring him help. He writes:

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weakness. He explains that although the skin was cool there was fire within, the people could not sleep and suffered anxiety of mind, sorrow and despair. For Thucydides account of the plague see Thucydides, 2.47-52.

[39] Hardie, Philip, *Ovid's Poetics of Illusion*, 2002, p. 297, writes: 'the autobiographical epistle is a more natural representative of its author than a long narrative poem'. References by Ovid to friendship and his early life see especially *Tr.* 1.9.59-60; 2.353-4; 4.10; *Pont*. 2.7.49-50; 4.1.23-4; and to his relationship with the family of Cotta Maximus, see: *Pont.* 2.3. 69-84;

[40] The poet has complained before about the harsh climate of his place of exile and has also mentioned the bad water and his poor health, (*Tr*. 3.3.7; 3.8.26; *Pont*. 2.7.73; 3.1.17-18).

> uos estis fracto tellus non dura phaselo
> quamque negant multi uos mihi fertis opem. (*Pont*. 1.10.39-40)
>
> You both are not hard land to a breaking little boat and you bring aid to me which many deny.

The word for boat, *phaselus*, varies the poet's usual shipwreck image. It is not a common word in Latin literature, and has its origin is the Greek word for 'bean pod' as the little boat is shaped like this. The word is mostly found within a Greek context:[41] it is used three times in Catullus 4 which comprises the boasts of a little boat born in Pontic lands and sailing the Pontic seas;[42] Propertius uses it when his poet/lover imagines traveling in such a little boat to Athens in order to cure himself of love (3.21.20);[43] and Ovid has used it before in his *Amores* 2.10, the poem which mentions Graecinus by name.[44] The word, as it is used here in *ex Ponto* 1.10, is most likely self-referential but also we can find significant echoes of Catullus 4,[45] where a number of the Greek place-names used are common to Ovid's exile poetry, especially in *ex Ponto* 4.9 and associated with the names of Flaccus and Graecinus. Allusion to Catullus 4, (a poem written in pure iambic trimeters, where this

[41] Virgil, *Georgics*, 4.289, uses the word to describe the little painted boats that Egyptian farmers need to move round their flooded fields. The word depends on the foreignness of its sound to draw out the exotic origin of the ritual required to restore bee production when the hive has failed through sickness or disease.

[42] Catullus 4, lines 1, 10 and 15. The little boat claims to have its origin from the pines from the mountains near the shores of the Black Sea and to have been the fastest and furthest traveled boat before its retirement dedicated to the gods Castor and Pollux, guardians of seafarers. See below note 45.

[43] Propertius 3.21.20. In this poem, the poet first refers to the ship by the conventional *navum*, 3.21.11, but once it has passed into Ionian waters it is referred to as a 'little boat' *phaselus*. In this poem the poet/lover takes a journey to ease the burden of love and hopes to die with honor, by natural causes not from love, while away from home.

[44] Ovid uses the word in a simile to describe the effects of loving two girls at one time, he is like a 'little boat' (*phaselus, Am*. 2.10.9) driven by contrary winds. It is telling that in this poem the poet/lover expresses his greatest wish is to die for love, *Am.* 2.10.30 and this also suggests a reference to Propertius 3.21.

[45] The word *phaselus* is used three times (Catullus 4.1, 10, 15). Fordyce, C.J., *Catullus, A Commentary*, Oxford, 1961, p. 97, sees in Catullus 4 'a high degree of conscious elaboration combining elements of traditional technique with new effects'. Ovid, in his exile poetry also follows this lead. Quinn, Kenneth, *Catullus, The Poems*, 1970, p. 101, draws attention also to the form of Catullus 4 as similar to an epitaph, but instead of 'laconic brevity, we have a conversational discursiveness'. From this reading of Catullus 4, I also see echoes in Ovid's exile poetry, because they are styled as letters. There is a certain similarity of tone between Catullus 4 and many of Ovid's exile letters, where the boasting of the little boat about his origins and faithful service, is echoed by the boasting of the poet about his origin, fame and undeserved exile.

Greek metre is coupled with Greek grammatical constructions), emphasizes a Greek variation to the usual literary shipwreck image.

This Greek reference, coupled with the image of a 'land not hard' (*tellus non dura, Pont*. 1.10.39) to a shipwreck, brings to mind the *Odyssey* and Odysseus' first sight of the land of the Phaiakians, a land that proves helpful to the exhausted swimmer.[46] In the *Odyssey* the hero's relief at the sight of land is likened to the relief felt at the end of a period of sickness of a father and here in *ex Ponto* 1.10 the poet expects relief from his physical ills from the help given by his friends. Contrast is set up between the suffering or sick poet and one helped by his good and loyal friends, Graecinus and Flaccus who are pictured by the poet as 'suppliants' (*suppliciter, Pont*. 1.10.44) who must both ask the gods to reduce Caesar's warranted wrath against him.[47] The poet constructs the recipient of this letter, Flaccus, in the same way as other recipients, as an ideal friend. Because of the distance between the writer and the recipient, the desired helpful response of the recipient is spelled out in to the letter. As well, a persona is constructed with those characteristics deemed by the poet to be helpful to him in exile.

[46] *Odyssey* 5.394ff. See also book 23.231ff where the feelings of Penelope on Odysseus' return are likened to the feelings experienced by the shipwrecked swimmer on gaining dry land. Lattimore, R., (tr) *The Odyssey of Homer*, New York, 1991.

[47] Flaccus, a friend and drinking companion of Tiberius, according to Suetonius, (*Tib.* 42.1) who writes of Tiberius: 'When already emperor and busily engaged on the reform of public morals, he spent two whole days and a night in an orgy of food and drink with Pomponius Flaccus and Lucius Piso – at the conclusion of which he made Flaccus Governor of Syria'. Rolfe, J.C. (tr) *Suetonius, Vol. I, The Lives of the Caesars*, Cambridge Mass., 1970, p. 353. Tacitus tells that he died about 32 A.D., (*Ann.* VI. 27.2f) Jackson, John, (tr) *Tacitus, The Annals, Books IV-VI, XI-XII*, Cambridge, Mass., 1962, p. 198-9. These references, presumably common knowledge at the time of Ovid's letter to Flaccus, would add another layer of meaning to the poem. Green, P., *Ovid: The Poems of Exile*, Harmondsworth, 1994(a), p. 314, writes: 'The choice of Flaccus as recipient of this list of failed appetites can only be described as heavily ironic…'

Focus cannot be fixed on a recipient-persona, however, because the poet uses recognizable names for the friends to whom he is writing and this seems to add autobiographical or historical detail, which complicates our perception of persona. I suggest that the use of names and the letter form coupled with literary and ethnographic subject matter comes about because the poet is so far from his friends and audience in Rome. Ovid blurs the distinction between person and persona in these last poems from exile by the inclusion of well known names. The poet blends the personal and private form of letters with the public nature of verse to make the exiled his appeal for help and sympathy stronger and with these techniques captures and holds the interest of the reader.

Conclusion

It is because Ovid is exiled to the shores of the Black Sea at the edge of the known world that he must use letters in place of the spoken word in order to communicate with his friends and fellow poets in Rome over this great distance. I have shown that, by reading the poems in the *Epistulae ex Ponto* with the poet's exile in mind, we can see that Ovid, as a popular and productive poet, uses many literary techniques and traditions to ensure that his poems are read and appreciated in his absence. I have shown that the separation of exile causes the poet to emphasize distance and geographical space and the poet's use of well known stories and ethnographic stereotypes is a result of his location so far from Rome. By drawing a parallel between himself in exile and the legendary hero Ulysses, the poet forces a re-reading of that hero's wanderings in the exotic world of literature and through this we see that Ovid's ethnocentric view of the world is both challenged and reinforced by his exile.

Epistolarity, or the letter form of these last poems is also a response to exile, because letters are able to bridge the distance between the poet and his friends at home. I have suggested that the letter form encourages the reader to focus on both the content and the imagined effect of the private letter when it is available to a wider audience as published verse. The letter form, with its subjective narrative written in the first person, calls attention to how the writer is represented and by increasing the use of his own name I see Ovid fuse person and persona in order to have just one voice heard in Rome. I have argued that Ovid's appraisal of himself as *vates* or poet/prophet shows that his sense of self is

profoundly influenced by his isolation from Rome and that his idea of self worth is firmly bound to his confidence in his poetry. I have also shown how the use of so many well known names of prominent Roman citizens in Ovid's poetry is innovative and how this not only personalizes the sentiments expressed but also encourages a historicist reading of these poems. Names create links between poems when two or more are addressed to the one individual and this increases our interest in both author and recipient. The poet's use of recognizable names for the recipients of his verse letters reinforces the duty or obligations of friendship in a public manner, adding weight to the poet's appeal for support and help to have his place of exile changed.

Although these letters of appeal did not result in a change for the exiled poet and he died a long way from his home, his work has lived on. As readers so far removed in time from the intended recipients of these letters, we still derive pleasure from them and our understanding is enhanced when we recognize that because of his distance from Rome the poet uses literary allusion, ethnographic stereotypes and epistolarity to make his letters a skillful substitute for the words he can no longer speak in person to his distant friends.

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